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ANNEX



HISTORY

OF

THE DIOCESE OF MEATH

BY

JOHN HEALY, LL.D.

Rector of Kells, and Canon of St. Patrick's, Dublin

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II.

DUBLIN:

ASSOCIATION FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE

37 DAWSON STREET

1908

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SEALY, BRYERS AND WALKER,
MIDDLE ABBEY STREET,
DUBLIN.

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HISTORY

OF THE

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CHAPTER XXIV.

The Revolution.

As soon as the issue of the battle of the Boyne was known, there was a great sigh of relief from the whole Protestant community of Ireland. After the fight, King William proceeded towards Dublin, and pitched his camp at Finglas. The church clergymen who were left in Dublin immediately formed themselves into a deputation, and waited on the Prince of Orange. They were headed by the Bishop of Meath, who in their name presented an address of welcome and congratulation, at the same time expressing their loyalty to him, and their prayers for his welfare.

On the Sunday following, a Thanksgiving Service was held in Saint Patrick's Cathedral in which the bishop took a prominent part.[1] Another similar service was held in Christ Church shortly after, at which Bishop Dopping preached. Some extracts from his sermon on that occasion have already been given. It will thus be seen that our bishop lost no time in transferring his allegiance to the conqueror.

[1] Mant.

Dopping's detractors put this down to his time-serving spirit, but another and more honourable explanation can easily be given, and there is no reason to suppose that he was actuated by any but the highest and most patriotic motives.

Nearly all the bishops followed the lead of Dopping. There were, however, among them two non-jurors. One was Sheridan, Bishop of Kilmore, who "retaliated the injuries inflicted on him from his late sovereign by a faithful and immovable allegiance." He left his diocese and went over to England, and was thereupon deprived, ostensibly because he had absented himself from his diocese without licence, but, of course, really because he refused to take the oath of allegiance. The other non-juror was Otway, Bishop of Ossory. An order for his suspension was issued, but Bishop Dopping interceded for him, and urged that "he that continues steadfast to the late King, from whom he received so many disobligations, and so slender a protection, will be much more so to his Majesty, when his judgment is convinced." [2] Dopping also wrote to Otway, setting forth the reasons why in his judgment the Prince of Orange should be acknowledged. Whether he succeeded in convincing him, or whether, being such an old man, it was deemed advisable to condone his offence, is not clear, but at all events, he was allowed to retain his See until his death, which occurred two years later.

While the war between the rival monarchs still continued a special form of prayer, suggested and probably drawn up by Bishop Dopping, was used in the churches every Friday, which day was set apart as a fast day, "appointed by the King and Queen for supplicating Almighty God for the pardon of our

[2] Mant, Preface to vol. ii., *History of the Church of Ireland.*

sins, and for imploring His blessing on their forces by land and sea." Among the prayers was one for the Protestants in those parts of the country where King James still retained his hold. It was entitled: "A Prayer for the rest of our brethren that are not yet delivered." This service was first used on the sixth of August, 1690.

Though the victory of the Boyne sealed the fate of King James, it was not to be expected that the turmoil of the country would be quelled in a moment. Not only were King James's soldiers still in the field, but the presence of even a friendly army, especially under the rules of warfare which obtained in those days, was not a thing that made for order or quietude. The Diocese of Meath that had suffered from the rabble, now suffered from the violence of the soldiers. The newly-regained power of the Protestants was not always used with due moderation, nor were men ready, after so much disorder, to settle down at once to peaceful pursuits. Another of Bishop Dopping's sermons, preached about this time, gives a glimpse of the sad condition in which the country remained for some time. He is preaching from the text (Daniel x., 2, 3), "In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks; I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled;" and he is urging the duty of humiliation and fasting, in view of the calamities of the country. He goes on to say:

I shall only confine myself to the state and condition of our own affairs, which certainly call upon us for a severer exercise of mortification than we have hitherto practised. How many of our brethren do still stay behind to enjoy that ease and plenty in England which they do not expect to meet with in this afflicted country, being neither touched with a feeling of the private sufferings nor a sense of the public calamities that are

upon the nation. What industrious arts we used to protract the war, and hinder the progress of that deliverance which God had so happily wrought for us.

We have likewise reason to fast and mourn because of the dismal state and condition of the kingdom wherein we live. We may take up the sad lamentation of the prophet Isaiah: 'Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire, your land is destroyed by strangers in your presence, and it is desolate as overthrown by strangers; and the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, and as a besieged city.' Our stately houses are burnt with fire, our costly and expensive improvements cut down and destroyed; some of our brethren are still under the power of their enemies, and those that are escaped them are forced to leave all behind them, and count it as an happiness that their lives are safe. . . . Our treacherous and disguised friends do secretly contrive our ruin by betraying our counsels, and endeavouring to disturb the public peace. Our deliverers oppress their friends whom they came to protect, and after that they have rescued them from the power of their enemies, they reserve them to fall as a sacrifice by their own hands, and think themselves to have a just title to all that they possess, because of the deliverance which they have brought them.

We are relapsed into the same sins that we solemnly renounced, and have practised the same inhumanities towards our enemies that we condemned in them towards ourselves. We called it plundering and injustice when they seized upon our goods, but we count it none in ourselves to take away theirs on the pretence of reprisals for our losses; and now that God has put it in our power to return good for evil, and observe that excellent rule of not doing to another what we would not have done to ourselves, we are so far from being induced to practice it, that we count it a lawful prize, and think it to be as innocent a game as that of the Israelites in spoiling the Egyptians.[3]

It is clear from this that Dopping was as unsparing in rebuking his friends as he had been formerly in resisting his foes. When such a picture could be drawn, we are not surprised to find that there was much suffering and even destitution amongst the clergy.

[3] *MS. Sermons, T.C.D.*

The bishop did something more than declaim on this subject. He made an appeal to his friends in England, and was able to collect a substantial sum for the purpose of meeting their present necessities. In connection with this appeal, the Bishop of London wrote a letter to Dopping, in which there are some extraordinary statements. The date of the letter is the 25th of September, 1690, a time when things were still in the greatest disorder, and when the majority of the clergy had been for several years without having received any income from their benefices. It seems to suggest that then, as so often before and since, Englishmen were profoundly ignorant of what was going on in the sister island. Whatever explanation may be given of it, the letter is curious and interesting. The Bishop of London says :—

> I am told that the clergy of Ireland lived in great luxury, particularly as to apparel and equipage, and, indeed we had some specimens come over hither now and then that made it the more suspicious. We have heard likewise great complaints of non-residence, and dispensations for holding benefices at extravagant distances. It is said that there are in many places very unreasonable unions of parishes, in quality as well as number. It has been talked as if some who formerly recommended to church preferments had too great a regard to their secular friends and relations. [4]

The Bishop of London was, no doubt, right in the matter of non-residence and unsuitable unions of parishes, but he does not seem to recognize that the fault lay with the English rulers. As to the luxury of apparel and equipage, it is quite certain that it was not kept up by the income of the benefices, Possibly some of those non-residents, who were better known in London than in their own parishes, may have made an ostentatious display, but they were men,

[4] *Dopping Correspondence*, Armagh.

appointed for the most part by the crown, who had other sources of income, and who regarded the tithes of their parishes in Ireland as additions given to reward them for political or other services.

As soon as peace was restored Bishop Dopping lost no time in taking up the work of reorganization in his diocese. What he accomplished in this respect will form the subject of the next chapter. Here it may be enough to point out some of the difficulties he encountered, not from the Romish party, but from his own co-religionists. The following insolent letter from the Earl of Cavan tells its own story:

October the last, 1691.

MY LORD,

I onely wrote to you in Civility to lett you know whoe I have appointed my Chaplin of Kilbeggan Parish, for that my father, being non compos ment[s] appointed none of Harvie in his life time, and Oliver Lambert presumptiously putt in Harvie, and I with power now in my Pattent from the former Kings of England putts in Griffith, and if you please to oblidge me in granting him a Licence you may; if not, I make bould to tell you I will keepe Griffith in posson of the place—turne him out you, if you can, for I will uphould him as farr as the Law will allow me ag[st] them that will oppose him, for it is my right to p[r]sent a minist[r] as it is for me to receive my Rents out of my Estate. I suppose you would keepe in Harvey upon your freind Oliv[r] Lamberts acco[t], being your ould acquaintance, but I assure your Lordshipp you will finde that I am not the man that has beene rep[r]sented to you and other noted men in this Kingdome, when occation shall offer I am onely to p[r]sent a minist[r] to you, and if you wont except of him I can put in afterwards whome I please, and soe assure your selfe for truth from

Your Lordpps humble Serv[t],

CAVAN.

If you will put in a minister (without my ord[rs]) as long as I have p[r]sented one to you already, I doe assure your Lordpp. I will make bould to turne him out by the should[rs]. [5]

[5] *Dopping Correspondence.*

It is amusing, but at the same time pathetic, to contrast this letter with another written to Bishop Dopping by the same nobleman a few years later:

8tober y^e^ 29th, '96.

My L^d^,

Amongst All the Rest of y^r^ kindnesses to me, I have one Request more to beg of you, y^t^ Is to App^r^ In Person att ye Councill Board to morrow and to give me yo^r^ Assistance there, otherwise I may Perish In the Streetes for want of Lodgeing and food, for there is some body or another y^t^ has Invent^d^ damnable Lies of me, sayeing y^t^ I reflect^d^ on some of y^e^ Councill by way of discourse. Certtainly Had I done itt I should be one of y^e^ Cursedest Blockheads In y^e^ world to Reflect upon y^m^ y^t^ gives me my dayly Bread. Pray my Lo stand my freind y^t^ my allowance might nott be taken away from me, and y^t^ If itt Can be made app^r^ upon Oath against me y^t^ ever I spoke scandelous words of any of the Privy Councill I will w^th^ Hum^ble^ Submission Beg their Pardon, butt I know of no offence y^t^ I have comitt^d^. there is a Tenn shills a weeke w^eh^ was laid up in m^r^ Palmers Hands w^ch^ Comes now to twenty Pounds due to me In arrears, and If they doe take it away, god forgive y^m^. Pray my Lo be so kind as to desire y^m^ to lett me have my arrea^rs^ to buy me Cloathes w^ch^ I am in much need, and to maintaine me and Beare my Charges w^n^ y^e^ wether settles to goe to England to wait on His Majesty, for I know I shall nott have wherew^th^all to Beare my charges Butt Must Beg att y^e^ gentlemens Houses by y^e^ way. Nott Doubting y^r^ Losp^s^ Kindness,

I remaine,

Yo^r^ Ldsps Most Humble Serv^t^,

CAVAN.[6]

In 1694 some livings in the gift of Lord Drogheda fell vacant, and Dopping thought it a good opportunity to make some unions which would render the parishes in the east end of the County Meath more workable. He accordingly wrote to that nobleman, and suggested

[6] *Dopping Correspondence.*

that Julianstown should be given to Mr. Thomas Langdale, if he were appointed by the Lords Justices to Ballygarth, that Ardcath and Timoole should be joined to Duleek, "which will make a competent maintenance for a resident incumbent," and that Moorechurch and Clonalvey should be joined to Stamullen. There was a Mr. Brown at that time incumbent of Clonalvey, but the bishop thought that he might be dispossessed, as he was already a good deal of a pluralist. He says "Mr. Brown by this means will grow as fat in purse as he is in body. but he must part with some things that he has, that he may not grow too bulky, and if it were left to me, I could soon resolve what they should be." The bishop concludes his letter by saying: "My Lord, it is now in your power to provide for the clamorous necessity of that side of the country, and to prevent their complaints for the future; and if something be not done at this time, the blame will lie at your lordship's door and not at mine."

This request seemed reasonable enough; it, however drew forth an extraordinary reply from Lord Drogheda:

Dublin, the 5th ffebruary, 1694.

MY VERY GOOD LORD,

An old gentleman whose looks seem'd to crave a writt of ease, from having too many cures to serve (therefore should be made a Bpp by my consent) deliverd me this day a Letter from yo^{r} Lordsp in somewhat an unusuall stile, which I cannot but resent, it having been allways my custome to consult your Lordship in the disposeing of what livings fell in my presentation, tho yo^{r} Lordsp has been pleas'd to be hard on me since the Breach of Boyne, on that account, which I pass'd by, rather than to have any difference with yo^{r} Lordsp, whom I ever honoured and esteem'd, but now I must take leave to tell yo^{r} Lordsp I shall present as I formerly writt you word,

and if my Presentations meet with any opposition I know what I have to doe, tho it will be a trouble to me to have any difference and dispute with a Bpp I soe much honour. I shall ever endeavour to present those that will not neglect their duty ; it is in your power to make them do it, tho not in your power to refuse my presentation. I doe assure you Mr. Browne did not say one word to me of Langdall nor any body else, but I was and am resolved not to give any of my Livings to Mrs. or Mr. Coote's chaplains, and my reasons I doe not think fitt to mention, neither am I oblidged to it. Mr. Higgins has undertaken to serve the cure of Duleek, and I doubt not but he will performe.

Yo^r^ Ldship in yo^r^ Letter to me of the 31st of the last month is under great mistakes about the number of Denominations of Parishes that Mr. Browne has. You mention Grangegeeth, Monknewtowne, Radrynagh, Knockamon, which are Townes of mine in the Ldship of Mellefont, and not as you apprehend them to be. I believe your Ldship knew the value of the living of Trim much better than any Livings of mine, and I believe would have been as well served and as much to the glory of God if it had not been annexed to the Bpprick. I am,

Yo^r^ Lordships humble Servant,
DROGHEDA.

I have sent Mr. Higgins to wait on you and to satisfy you, which is a compliment I might have let alone.

Yo^r^ Ldship desird me in one of yo^r^ Letters to give the Living of Julianstowne to him whom the Lords Justices gave Ballygart to, and att the same time recomended Langdall for it to the Government, which was not clear yo^r^ Lordship had not yo^r^ considering Cap on, if you had you would have writt to the Lords Justices to have given Ballygart to the man that I presented to Julianstowne, for if you had thought on it, I am sure you know me so well that you might have been confident it could have been done no other way to have joyned those two livings.[7]

Some further correspondence ensued, and evidently a compromise was effected. The last letter preserved is from Lord Drogheda, who says :—

I this day received yo^rs^ of the 6th, if yo^r^ Lordsp has a coppy of the Letter you writ to me as I have of that which I

[7] *Dopping Correspondence.*

writt to you, you will find who was the first egressor by way of an angry stile. But as it is in Proverbs Chap. the 15, ver. the 1st, A soft answer turneth away wrath but grievous words stir up anger, and in another Scripture, Lett not the sun goe downe upon your wrath, and this I hope in God I shall stick too, and I doubt not but yor Lordship will doe the same.

The See of Dublin became vacant by the death of Archbishop Francis Marsh on the 16th of December, 1693. Considering the eminent position which Bishop Dopping held, and the invaluable services which he had rendered in times of great trial, it was natural that his name should be mentioned amongst those who were likely to be advanced to the archiepiscopal dignity. King William, however, seems never to have regarded him with any great favour. Already the bishop had given offence by a sermon in which he urged that the articles of the treaty of Limerick should not be held binding, and pleaded for stricter enforcement of the laws against Roman Catholics. On that occasion the King had expressed his great displeasure, and gave orders that Dopping should be removed from the Privy Council. Acting on the advice of the Bishop of London, Bishop Dopping wrote to the King, giving explanations and apologies, and shortly afterwards received from that prelate a letter which told him that "the King is very well satisfied with your submission, and to give you an assurance that he has laid aside all his displeasure, he has given order to my Lord Sidney to restore you to all the marks of his favour at his first arrival." [8]

The offence was thus condoned, but it was not forgotten. Other things, too, were remembered against him, specially his adherence to the cause of King James as long as the issue of the struggle was

[8] *Dopping Correspondence.*

in any doubt. During that time, too, he had made enemies for himself among some of the Protestants, who were not slow now in misrepresenting his conduct. The Bishop of London tells him that "the objections made by those who were against your promotion was that you had been once very zealous for showing favour to the Papists, and afterwards for having them all hanged." In another letter he says :—

I heard my Lord Sydney say he was not for your having the archbishopric, because in King James' time you was for destroying the Protestants (I suppose he meant the dissenters), and in King William's time for routing the Papists.

In another letter he gives still further particulars :—

I can only tell you at present that a speech in King James his Parliament was extremely applauded ; so for abatement I find it objected that you prayed at that time for the Prince of Wales, moved for some severities against dissenters, and had prayers for that King's success upon his expedition at the Boyne. You felt what resentment was taken at your unseasonable sermon, as it was then styled, the copy of which, to my grief, I have been cheated of. The last offence taken was at your appearing before our House of Lords, when they say you ought not to have appeared, to give an account of what passed at a Privy Council whereof you yourself was a member, and that you laid your load upon others, when you yourself was most forward in giving that advice which was complained of.

The result of all this was not only that Dopping was passed over in the appointment of the archbishopric, but that to the end of his days he continued to be more or less under a cloud. In the meantime he had work enough to do in his Diocese of Meath, where all things needed rearrangement. His efforts in this direction will form the subject of our next chapter.

CHAPTER XXV.

Bishop Dopping's Visitation Return.

The establishment of the power of William III. marks for us the end of a long period of suffering and disaster, and the dawning of more peaceful days for the Church of Ireland. For fifty years she had gone through troubles such as she had never seen before, and has never seen since. Three separate attempts had been made to blot her out of existence: first, by the rebels of 1641 and the "Catholic Confederation" which they established; secondly by the Puritans under Cromwell; and thirdly, by King James II. After such a period of trial we can scarcely wonder that she was weak and exhausted, and that the process of recovery was slow. It is to be feared also that the lessons of adversity were but imperfectly learned. Statesmen tried to help the Church in their blundering way by the enactment of penal laws, but life and vigour could never be given by means such as these. Indeed, the penal laws have hindered our Church more than anything else in her whole history. All this, however, belongs to a later period. Our present task is to show the condition of the Church after those fifty years of warfare and tribulation, and the efforts that were made by her rulers to heal the wounds that she had received.

Happily, the materials at our disposal, as far as the Diocese of Meath is concerned, are all that could be desired. A Royal Visitation was held in the year 1693, and the report then drawn up by Bishop Dopping

is still preserved.[1] This describes for us the state of the diocese in detail, giving the condition of every district parish by parish. The description, on the whole, is saddening. Again and again we have the entry that the church is "in ruin since 1641." The number of the clergy was few, and more than the fourth part of them were non-resident; others were pluralists, having parishes so far asunder that it was utterly impossible for the duties to be properly discharged. Several parishes were without any provision for the cure of souls.

A few extracts may be given as illustrations of the condition of the several parishes, choice being made of the more important centres. Of Mullingar the bishop tells that it was formerly worth twenty-five pounds per annum, but that the income was then not more than seven pounds. The church and chancel were repaired, but the vicar resided at Galtrim, which parish he also held, and only gave the Mullingar people a service once a fortnight. The large parish of Killucan had a non-resident incumbent, who spent his time in Dublin. His curate lived in the parish, and "preaches as often as his age and infirmities permit." The church and chancel were in very bad repair, and six chapels of ease, which were situated in different parts of the parish, were all in ruin. That part of the country had suffered much in the recent troubles, and was "mightily waste at present, not having above fifteen Protestant families in it." In Duleek, and indeed in a great many other parishes, they had service only once a fortnight. "This church," we are told, "was anciently a cathedral church, and the seat of a bishop, but was reduced to the head of a rural deanery by Cardinal Paparo in the year 1152; afterwards

[1] Bishop Dopping's Report is in Marsh's Library. There is also a transcript in the Record Office, Dublin.

impropriate to the abbey of Lanthony in England, and upon the dissolution of the abbeys granted to Sir Garrett Moor. It had organs and a choir in King James the First his days, but upon granting away the chantry lands which supported the expense of them, it fell to decay. There are still standing the walls of a fair large church and chancell, with two aisles adjoining to it, but all out of repair these fifty years, except the porch, where the parishioners assemble to Divine service."

Of course, there are some reports more favourable than these, but it is hard to find one in which the record is altogether satisfactory. In Trim the church was in good repair, and the services constantly maintained, but the chancel was in ruin. In Kells, on the other hand, the chancel was in repair, and the body of the church in ruin. In several cases we are told that the services were regularly conducted, though both church and chancel were in ruin. For the most part no information is given as to where the parishioners assembled. Sometimes, however, we are told that they met in the porch, as in the case of Duleek just quoted. In Kentstown also, the porch was able to accommodate the few parishioners who came to church. In other places, we learn that they met in private houses. This was the usage at Rathmolyon, Kilberry, Moynalty, and a few other places. At Stackallen they made use of the private chapel of Mr. Serjeant Osburn. At Navan they repaired the Mass house, and held their service there. No general effort seems to have been made as yet to rebuild the churches.

Bishop Dopping sums up these several reports by telling us that the diocese contained one hundred and ninety-seven parish churches and one hundred and six chapels of ease, but only forty-three churches in all

were in repair. There were fifty-five clergymen, fifteen of whom were non-resident. There were one hundred and forty-four impropriate churches and chapels in the hands of lay persons. He adds that in 1688 there were five other churches in repair, but they had been ruined since that time by the late troubles. "All the rest of the churches and chapels have been out of repair ever since 1641, but the walls of them are still standing."

The most interesting part of this report is the conclusion, in which the bishop, under the heading of "Observations," summarizes the results, and makes suggestions as to what he considered necessary for the future well-being of the Church. With the help of this, it is possible to present a fairly accurate picture of the condition of the Diocese of Meath at that time.

He begins by saying that of the impropriate parishes in the hands of laymen, twenty had no provision for a curate, and twenty-nine had only three pounds per annum or less. These were the parishes that had formerly belonged to the monasteries. In the time of Henry VIII. they passed into lay hands, but it was stipulated that in each case some provision should be made for the spiritual wants of the people. Unfortunately this duty was in most cases shamefully neglected, and the government seems never to have enforced the clauses in the patents which provided for it. The result was that in fully half of the Diocese of Meath, the vicarages were so poor that there could be no adequate provision for the cure of souls.

Besides these, there were other parishes in which the endowments were miserably small, or where such large payments had to be made to the crown, that scarcely anything was left for the incumbent. Then, there were no less than fifty-nine parishes "either

totally waste or impoverished by the late troubles." The only way in which it was possible to provide for these parishes was by union with some of the adjoining churches. To facilitate this, an act had recently been passed, but as yet only eleven such unions had been effected, and in some of the eleven the validity of the union was disputed.

The bishop directs attention to the number of churches that were in ruin, and enumerates the causes. They were threefold: first, the frequent wars and troubles in the kingdom; secondly, the neglect of the parishioners, whose duty it was to keep the body of the church in repair, and of the impropriators and clergy, whose duty it was to look after the chancels; and thirdly, the weakness of ecclesiastical power, and the great expense and delay of proceedings in the ecclesiastical courts. These last were so cumbrous and ineffective that the cost of recovering rates that had been levied and not paid, swallowed up all the proceeds, leaving nothing for the purpose for which the rate was struck.

Bishop Dopping goes on to suggest some remedies which might counteract these three things which had caused the ruin of the churches; and his suggestions here throw a curious light on the ideas then held, as to the nature of political and religious liberty. He gives it as his opinion, that wars and commotions may be prevented by hindering the Romanists from sending their children to the Continent for education; by suffering none of them to be bred up in the inns of court, "for it is," he says, "their lawyers have done the greatest mischief, and formed and managed their politics in all commotions;" and by causing "Popish minors that are heirs" to be brought up as Protestants. In all this, of course, he only reflects the spirit of the

age. People did not yet understand that these were unworthy means which defeated their own ends, because, for one who would be gained by such devices great numbers would be estranged, and bitter seeds of dissatisfaction would be sown, which it would take generations to eradicate.

The reluctance of the people to pay the rates levied for the repair of the churches he would meet by simplifying the methods of procedure in the ecclesiastical courts, and by giving imprisonment rather than excommunication as a punishment for disobedience. "Excommunication," he says, "is too dreadful and severe a sentence to inflict for such small matters as are usually the occasion of the contumacy;" but he admits that many of the people cared very little for his excommunication, even though it were "the last and highest act of the Church's censure." He thinks that the chancels, at all events, might be put in repair, as the rector in each case was liable for the work. In the case of impropriate parishes the lay rectors could be compelled by the King, "by suing them on the clauses and covenants in their patents;" and where the rector was a clergyman, the bishop could proceed by sequestrating the "issues and profits" of his living. Voluntary effort, which has become such a feature in modern church life, does not seem to have suggested itself to his mind at all.

He then goes on to detail the causes why there were so many non-resident clergymen. He gives six reasons: first, the smallness of the livings, not able each to maintain a resident minister; second, the want of Protestants to come to church; third, the want of glebes in some places, and in all, the decay of the manse houses, by the frequent wars in this kingdom; fourth, the unequal distribution of livings, which being in the

hands of several patrons, are not disposed by them with respect to their contiguity, or the convenience of the parishioners; fifth, defects and faults in the faculties; and sixth, the narrow bounds and limits of several parishes.

He dwells at considerable length on all these six points. Anyone who knows the Diocese of Meath will recognize at once that several of these difficulties might have been overcome by a judicious union of parishes, and Dopping himself was strongly of this way of thinking. Unfortunately, there were serious obstacles in the way. He tells us that in the reign of Charles II. an Act was passed to facilitate the union of parishes, but, he says, "it proved a remedy almost as bad as the disease; for the incumbents being at the charge of the unions, they fixed on such as were most for their profit and advantage, or else would not pass them; by means whereof some parishes are left without unions, and others are too large, and the inhabitants dwelling too far from the parish church." When a union was formed, it was clearly the intention that the new parish should provide sufficient income for the incumbent, so that he would be under no temptation to accept other cures, the duty of which he would not be able to accomplish. Some clergymen, however, had obtained faculties which enabled them to hold two of these unions, and thus the evil, so far from being remedied, was only intensified by the attempt made to cope with it.

According to Dopping, a great deal of church property in the Diocese of Meath had been lost to the Church, "partly from alienations formerly made, partly from non-residence of the clergy in former times, and the many revolutions and troubles in this kingdom." He tells us also that a considerable portion

of church land in Meath had been included in the forfeited estates, and had thus passed into other hands. The bishop complains that the Lord Lieutenant and Council had given orders to the Commissioners of the Court of Claims "that all lands belonging to the Church and others that were not returned in the Civil or Down Survey to be their property, were to be deemed as forfeited, and vested in his Majesty, to the uses of the Act; by means whereof, their glebes being small in most places—in some not exceeding two acres, and in many not being full one—were surveyed among the rest of the forfeited lands as part of them, and no return made in the surveys of the Church's right, and so the ancient glebes are lost for ever, and the small pittance of glebes that still remain and is mentioned in the surveys is in danger to be lost by the clergy's non-residence."

The following are Dopping's ideas as to how the "want of Protestants to come to church" might be supplied. He says:—

To remedy the want of Protestants, the putting the Acts against recusants (1 Eliz.) strictly into execution would be very proper. By it, every one without cause absenting from Common Prayer was to pay twelve pence a Sunday, which was executed during all her reign and the reign of King James, and some time in the beginning of King Charles I., but relaxed on reasons of state, which proved the decay of the Protestant religion in this kingdom. This would be a means to get the King money, and the penalty is so easy that the recusant would have no just reason to complain of it. Secondly, by heartily endeavouring the conversion of the natives and the bringing them over to our communion, wherein the state must concur as well as the clergy. Thirdly, by sending missionary preachers to preach to them in the Irish tongue. Fourthly, by erecting English schools, and appointing salaries to the masters of them, to instruct them gratis in the English tongue, and obliging the masters to teach them the principles of religion, as well as the English language. There was a statute passed in this kingdom to that purpose (28 H. 8, c, 15), obliging every

beneficed minister to keep an English school, and obliging the bishop to give them the oath about it before institution (which the bishops do); but the work is not done, partly by the clergy's fault, who have other things to mind, but more especially by the want of a penalty in the statute, obliging the Irish to send their children to them. Fifthly, by banishing their clergy, both regular and secular, there being little hopes of converting the people whilst they are suffered in the kingdom. Sixthly, by suppressing Popish school-masters, especially such as teach Latin, for these men train up their children for very little to the Latin tongue, till they are fit to be sent abroad, where they are maintained out of charity, or by begging, till they learn philosophy, and know how to read Mass, and then they are put into Orders, and sent back as missionaries. The late Act of Uniformity (17 Car. 2, c. 6) might put some stop to this if it were pursued, but the justices of peace and the gentlemen of the country are the persons that encourage them, because they can get their children taught for little by them in their houses.

The appointment of rural deans had gone out of use, and Bishop Dopping proposes to restore them, so that they may "inspect the manners of the clergy and people, and certify the bishop of all emergencies," he would also have them "keep their rural chapters as anciently they did." And he would further not allow any clergyman to hold parishes in two rural deaneries, "much less in several dioceses." He has many other good suggestions about the building of residences, and compelling the clergy to reside in them, and several other points, which show that he had thought much on these subjects. The pity was that so few of the suggestions were ever translated into action.

It will be noted that among other things, Dopping advocated the sending of mission preachers among the people, who would endeavour to reach the masses by speaking to them in the Irish tongue. This was a subject in which he seems to have taken a special

interest. Some years previously the Honourable Robert Boyle—" honourable by descent and parentage, more to be honoured for his intellectual and moral endowments ; still more worthy of honour as the great Christian philosopher, who laboured to advance the truth and glory of God " [2]—took the work in hand of publishing the Bible in Irish, and by his influence, caused many of his fellow churchmen to take an interest in the project. Amongst those who helped, alike with advice and money, as we have already seen, Dopping took a prominent part, and when the book was at length published, the Preface was from the bishop's pen. Several letters are preserved, discussing the business arrangements, and it appears that five hundred copies of the Testament were printed, at a cost of four hundred pounds. This amount was raised by subscription, and each subscriber received a proportionate number of copies, according to the amount of his contribution. Many of the subscriptions were obtained at the personal solicitation of Bishop Dopping. When the book was issued, he wrote to Lady Ranelagh, expressing his approval of it.[3]

In the troubles of that time, it is to be feared that the Church in the Diocese of Meath lost instead of gaining, for some of her members had not the courage of their convictions, and in the time of trial apostatized from the faith. When peace was restored, however, many of them sought reconciliation, and for these, as well as for converts from Romanism, Dopping drew up a form of service, which was entitled, " A Form for Receiving Lapsed Protestants, and Reconciling Converted Papists to our Church." This form was for many years bound up with the Irish Prayer Book, though it does not appear to have been

[2] Mant. [3] *Dopping Correspondence.*

ever sanctioned either by convocation or synod. It directs the clergyman of the parish to send the convert to the bishop with an "Abrenunciation of Popery," of which three forms are given, one for ordinary persons, another for persons of more liberal education, and a third for priests or such as are likely to teach others. On this document being signed, the registrar is directed to give a certificate to the convert, for which he is to charge one shilling and no more, and if he be unwilling or unable to pay, "the bishop will take care it be paid for him."

Armed with this certificate, the convert, having given notice a week previously to the minister, is brought up to the reading desk "by the churchwardens, or two grave discreet parishioners or Christian neighbours." The clergyman appeals to the congregation to declare if any impediment exists why the convert should not be received, and then charges the man himself to disclose any unworthy motive which may be influencing him to take this step. After that the convert recites the Apostles' Creed, and reads the "Schedule of his Penance," in which he acknowledges his fault, and asks for reconciliation. Then the minister asks the people to pray for the convert, and some versicles and collects follow, after which comes the Absolution, given with the laying on of hands: "Our Lord Jesus, who hath commanded that repentance and remission of sins should be published in His name among all nations, of His great mercy give unto thee true repentance, and forgive thee all thy sins. And I His minister, by the authority committed unto me, do absolve thee from all ecclesiastical censures which thou hast or mayest have incurred by reason of thy former errors, schisms, and heresies, and I restore thee to the full communion of the Catholic Church. In the

Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." The Service concludes with the Blessing.

Bishop Dopping continued to rule the Diocese of Meath until his death, which took place in 1697. In his last years, however, he had become somewhat infirm, and was afflicted with deafness. As we have seen, too, he was under the discountenance of the government. If he had been a younger man he might possibly have carried out some of those reforms the need of which he insists on in these observations. As it was, he had not the energy to do much, and it is to be feared that for some years before his death the diocese was without that strong ruling hand which it needed so much. Archbishop King—(but it must be remembered that he was accused of being "a positive opinionated man, wedded to his own way")—makes a curious comparison between himself and Bishop Dopping. He says :—

I remember an understanding and sincere friend once ingenuously told me that I was too rough and positive in my treating my clergy, and proposed to me the example of the late Bishop of Meath, Doctor Dopping, a person who was in truth much better skilled in the laws and constitutions of the Church than I was, had the good thereof as much at heart as any man could have, was of a meek and gentle spirit, and managed all things with mildness and gentle persuasion. I asked my friend whether he was well acquainted with the Dioceses of Meath and Derry, and desired him to tell me whether of them he thought in best condition, as to churches built and repaired, as to the progress of conformity, service of the cures, and flourishing of the clergy as to their temporals. He freely owned that Derry was in a much better condition as to all these, and that it was due to the care that I had taken. To which I replied that he knew that the churches had been more destroyed in Derry, and the state of the clergy and conformity more disturbed and wasted than in any place of Ireland ; and yet in five or six years that I had been there bishop

it was put in a better posture by the methods I took, than Meath was in fifteen by the bishop's ; and that he might judge by that which of the two were best.

From this we may gather that Dopping was of a particularly amiable disposition, slow to censure—perhaps too slow—and ready to let things pass rather than speak an angry word. With such a disposition, we are not surprised to learn that when he was first raised to the episcopate his old parishioners in Dublin presented him with a piece of plate as a token of their esteem. Such a presentation meant more then than it would now, for the act was not then as usual as it has since become. King seems to suggest that he lacked force of character. The recorded incidents of his life do not give us such an idea of him. On the contrary, he appears as a courageous man, who stood his ground and did not desert his post during all the troubles of the Revolution. Judging by the records he has left, we would say that he was energetic in the administration of his diocese. Very possibly his case was of that kind which so often happens in this world: in the weakness of his declining years the strength of his years of vigour was forgotten. It was rather unfair for a comparatively young man like King to compare himself with one whose life was drawing to a close, and the infirmities of whose age were to a great extent caused by the sufferings that he had endured in defence of the Church.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Early Years of the Eighteenth Century.

Upon the death of Bishop Dopping, there was considerable anxiety in the minds of those who had the welfare of the Church at heart as to the appointment of his successor. Those were days in which political motives counted for much, and when the men who had strong interest at court could generally obtain any position that they desired; but the suitability of the candidate was often one of the last things that was considered. The name of Bishop Fitzgerald of Clonfert was very freely mentioned, and many were of opinion that if he were translated to Meath it would prove disastrous to the diocese. We have few particulars about him, but we know that he was not highly thought of by his contemporaries. When he was consecrated to Clonfert, Archbishop Marsh of Cashel wrote in his diary, "In which consecration I have had no hand; the Lord's Name be praised for it! nor may I ever be concerned in bringing unworthy men to the Church."[1] He was, besides, an old man, and had not the energy for managing a diocese like Meath at such a time, even if he had been otherwise suitable.

Bishop King of Derry, who was in many ways the leading churchman of the time, was very much exercised about the appointment, and spoke of Bishop Fitzgerald as "the weakest of the order, and having no qualification to recommend him." He also

[1] Mant.

addressed a letter to Sir Robert Southwell on the subject, which, as it throws a good deal of light on the condition of Meath at that time, may here be given. It is as follows :—

L:derry, April 29th, 1697.

Sir,

I am very unwilling to give you any trouble except it be on necessary occasions, and I look on the present as eminently so. I understand by my letters from Dublin, which I left on the twentieth instant, that since my coming from thence it has pleased God to remove the Bishop of Meath, a most useful and eminent pillar of our Church, before his late impairment by sickness, and in particular my friend and assistant, upon whose advice I would rely in matters of moment. 'Tis of the last consequence to the Church here, and to his Majesty's service, that that place be supplied with a proper person. I will therefore take the liberty to lay the case of the bishopric before you, and doubt not but you will do in this, as I have ever found you to do heretofore ; I mean, improve the intimations I give you to the best advantage.

The Bishopric of Meath is the first in the kingdom, as London is in England, and takes place next to the archbishops, but it is much inferior in value to many of them. The bishop is usually of the Privy Council, and resides in Dublin. We have at present these clergymen of the Privy Council, the Lord Primate, the Archbishop of Dublin, the Bishop of Kildare, and Bishop of Cloyne ; and the Bishop of Meath was likewise of it ; and yet the church interest was very weak there, for the Lord Primate is disabled, and never appeareth ; the Bishop of Meath was under the discountenance of the government, and besides, by the infirmity of his hearing and other defects, could be but little serviceable for these last years ; and the Archbishop of Dublin (though an excellent person and a scholar) yet is too modest and unacquainted with the world to make a great bustle, without which, I am informed, little is done there. The Bishop of Kildare hath likewise his disadvantages ; and the Bishop of Coyne is seldom at the board, and is not yet in so great authority as hereafter he will be, by reason of his age. So that upon this matter the church interest at the council-table depends on the fit choice of a person to fill the Bishopric of Meath.

There are some such (as the Bishop of Clogher) that would be fit for it, but they are already in better bishoprics, and cannot, without imputation of imprudent ambition, accept it. If I might (between you and me) discover my sense, I think the Bishop of Waterford would do well in it; and Dr. Smith, Dean of St. Patrick's, that attends his Majesty, might be sent to Waterford. By the care and prudence of the present bishop that diocese is put in tolerable order, as I observed when there last summer; and it is a good testimony of the bishop's prudence that he governed a parish in Dublin for fourteen years in very difficult times, with the greatest love and highest approbation of his parishioners, and has now with the same success governed for five or six years his diocese. . . .

I have one consideration more to press for the putting the Bishop of Waterford into the post, and 'tis the great disorder in which the Diocese of Meath is. 'Tis one of the largest in Ireland, consisting anciently of five bishoprics, at least sixty miles long, in an excellent country; but the lands were mostly made away or exchanged for tithes about the Reformation; the rest of the tithes are generally impropriate and many parishes must be united to make a competency. The late bishop, being infirm since the Revolution, was not able to look to the cures as was necessary, and there needs an active, vigorous, and skilful person to put them in order, such as the Bishop of Waterford; and I hope you will use your endeavour to place him or some such there. I am now to beg your pardon for this trouble, but, lest I should increase it, I will conclude with my hearty prayers for you, and the humblest respects of,

Sir, yours, &c.,

W. D.

To Sir Robert Southwell. [2]

Bishop King was mistaken in supposing that the Bishop of Clogher would not be willing to accept the See of Meath. As a matter of fact, he was appointed to be Dopping's successor, and accepted the post, for though inferior in revenue to Clogher, the Bishopric of Meath was higher in dignity, it was more convenient to the metropolis, and it carried with it a seat in the

[2] Mant.

Privy Council. Richard Tennison, who now succeeded, was first raised to the episcopate as Bishop of Killala. From thence he fled during the troubles of the Revolution, and for a time undertook the cure of souls in a London parish. After the defeat of King James he was once more brought back to Ireland, and was appointed to the See of Clogher, where he distinguished himself as a preacher and as a diligent worker in his diocese. He was appointed to Meath in 1697, and continued to occupy the See until 1705. At his death, "he set a valuable example to his brethren and his successors, by bequeathing a sum of money to the Lord Primate for the purchase of land, to serve as the foundation for a fund, to which he expressed his hope that the bishops of the kingdom would make additions, for the maintenance of clergymen's widows and orphans." [3]

The appointment of Bishop Tennison marks a new epoch in the history of the Diocese of Meath. It inaugurated the time of restoration, in which an attempt was made to repair the breaches caused by the many troubles which for so many years had afflicted the Church. If Bishop Dopping had been a younger man, no doubt he would have taken this work in hand, but the infirmities of age prevented him, and it was therefore left to his successor. Churches which had long continued in ruin were now rebuilt, and in some cases the opportunity was taken of removing them to a more convenient site. The funds were obtained partly from impropriate rectories which had been forfeited by their lay owners, on account of their opposition to the Prince of Orange, and which were now in some cases applied in this way; and partly from the benefactions of churchmen, who began to take a greater

[3] Mant.

interest in their Church than before. There were instances, too, of new endowments being given to parishes by private donors, so that we may fairly say that the opening years of the eighteenth century mark for us the beginning of better things.

The names of these benefactors who came to the help of the Church, and assisted in repairing her breaches, have been for the most part lost in oblivion. At the present time Trim is the best endowed parish in the Diocese of Meath. The endowment dates from about this period, when the lands of Dunleivers, containing 222 acres 36 perches, were bequeathed to Doctor John Crookshanke, Vicar of Trim, with succession to the vicars of Trim for ever, by a Cromwellian "debenturer," whose name remains unknown, though the fruit of his deeds is still being reaped.[4] An equivalent for this property was claimed at the time of disestablishment as a private endowment, and has been secured to the parish.

Another example may be taken from the Parish of Castlelost. Prime Iron Rochfort was, as his Christian names suggest, a Puritan soldier. He was a lieutenant colonel in Cromwell's army, but was executed for killing one Major Turner in a duel which he fought in 1652. His son, Robert Rochfort, purchased property in the neighbourhood of Castlelost, which continues to be in possession of his family to the present day. He was a man eminent in his time, having been speaker of the Irish House of Commons in 1695, and Chief Baron of the Exchequer in 1707. He took a great interest in Castlelost parish, and built, in his own demesne at Gaulstown, "a very beautiful church, wainscoted, painted, seated, and flagged, and furnished with all necessaries in the most decent manner, all

[4] Butler, *Trim Castle*.

at his own charge." He also endowed the parish. In acquiring the property he had become "impropriator" of the rectory, and was therefore owner of the tithes, but he conveyed them to the bishop of the diocese for the use of the perpetual curate.[5] The parishioners in this case were not so fortunate as those of Trim, for when the church was disendowed no one seems to have been aware of this benefaction, and it was assumed that the tithes of the parish had been handed down to it from pre-reformation times. Consequently, no claim was made until many years after the time laid down in the Irish Church Act, and even after the extension of that time which had been made by the Representative Church Body. In the meantime, the balance of the amount awarded to the the church in lieu of private endowments had been applied to other purposes, as it was not expected that any other claims could be made. Under these circumstances the parish could only obtain a sum of £646 8s. 8d., which still remained unappropriated, and which was voted as a special act of grace by the General Synod of 1902. If the claim had been made in time, an income of about two hundred pounds a year would have been secured to the parish.

Under Queen Anne the Diocese of Meath, in common with the rest of the Church, was enriched by the remission of the old papal imposts of "first-fruits" and "twentieth parts." The former was applied to the purchase of glebes and the building of houses, and the latter was granted to the individual clergymen by whom they would have been payable. It was Doctor Swift, then vicar of Laracor, and afterwards famous as Dean of Saint Patrick's, who conducted the negotiations which led to these benefits being granted

[5] *State of the Diocese of Meath*, 1733, MS. in Record Office, Dublin.

to the Church.[6] Under the same queen the tithes of some impropriate parishes were restored to the Church, the impropriators having been deprived for rebellion. In this way the vicarages were endowed of Dunamore, Ratoath, Culmullin, Moyglare, and Kilcormuck (Frankford).

Nor was it only in material ways that the Church prospered. Her bishops became more active than before, and this in turn reacted on the clergy. King, now become Archbishop of Dublin, writing to one of his suffragans in 1706, says:—"I do own that the clergy are altered as to their demeanour towards their bishops of late, of which several reasons may be given; one particularly is, the bishops being altered towards them. Time was when they were left to themselves, and might do, or not, their duty as they pleased. But of late some bishops have begun to look more narrowly into their practice, and to press their duty on them." [7]

The archbishop seemed to think that the clergy resented the interference of the bishops. No doubt, this may have been true in some instances, but we may be sure that the greater part loyally seconded the efforts that were being made to infuse new life into the Church.

Bishop Tennison did not long retain the See of Meath, as he died in 1705. He was succeeded by William Moreton, who had been already Bishop of Kildare, and who continued in the See until 1715. We have little or no record of his episcopate. On his death it would appear that the Rev. John Law was appointed. He had been Rector of Monaghan from 1712, and was of a Scotch family. He died soon after his appointment to Meath, before he was enthroned,

[6] Shirley's *Historical Sketch of the Endowments of the Church of Ireland*, published in the appendix to the Report of the Royal Commission, 1868.
[7] Mant.

and it does not appear whether he was ever actually consecrated.[8]

There is a curious story told which would seem to connect the Jansenist Church of Holland with the Diocese of Meath, just about this time. In the early years of the eighteenth century the Jansenists were without a bishop, in consequence of the refusal of the Pope to allow consecrations to the vacant Sees, and at one time it seemed as if their episcopate would become entirely extinct. It was necessary for them, therefore, to make some provision for the ordination of their priests. They made application to various prelates in vain, but at length are said to have approached Luke Fagan, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Meath, and found in him one who was willing to accede to their wishes. Accordingly twelve candidates for the priesthood were sent over, and these were ordained by Bishop Fagan, one of them being Peter John Meindarrts, who became afterwards Jansenist Archbishop of Utrecht. Bishop Fagan required all twelve to promise that they would never reveal the circumstances of their ordination during his life, and to a certain extent the secret was kept. It came to the knowledge of the authorities at Rome, however, that such an ordination had taken place, though the information received was not sufficient to indicate any particular bishop. Fagan, in the meantime, had become Archbishop of Dublin, and the Pope wrote to him, telling of the rumours that had come to his ears, and asking him to ascertain if they were well founded or otherwise. The Archbishop thereupon formally asked each bishop separately, if he had taken part in this ordination, and as they all very naturally denied it,

[8] *Pedigree of the Law Family*, quoted in letter to the author from the Rev. H. L. L. Denny.

he wrote to the Pope, and informed him, that after examination he was persuaded that none of those bishops of whom he had inquired was the guilty party.

A story of this kind is manifestly difficult of verification, and it is easy to raise many objections against it. It has therefore been rejected by Cardinal Moran, and other Roman Catholic writers. It is not for us to decide. We simply give the story as it has been handed down.

The next bishop in order was John Evans, who was translated from the See of Bangor. Archbishop King did not approve of this appointment, for in reference to it he says: "What signifies the interest of a diocese to the advantage of a friend that is to be preferred?" He had the reputation of being a political partizan. He, however, proved in the end a munificent benefactor of the Diocese of Meath. By his will he left part of his estate "for building, if not built by himself, according to his intention, an episcopal house at Ardbraccan;" and part "for purchasing glebes and impropriate tithes for the benefit and endowment of the several churches in the Diocese of Meath, in the sole donation of the bishops of that See."[9] This latter portion of the bequest, having been secured to the diocese at the time of disestablishment as a "private endowment," has enabled a sum of £2,304 7s. 5d. to be spent on the repurchase of glebes, and now provides, besides, a yearly income of £536 8s. 11d., part of which is appropriated to certain parishes, and part is at the disposal of the bishop.

Bishop Evans died in 1724, and was succeeded by Henry Downes, who was translated from Elphin. He, however, did not remain long in Meath, for he

[9] Mant.

was translated to Derry in 1727. Ralph Lambert next succeeded. He was, like most of the bishops of that day, an Englishman, and had come over to Ireland as chaplain to the Earl of Wharton. In 1717 he was raised to the episcopate as Bishop of Dromore, and in 1727 was translated to Meath. He met his death five years later by accident. He trod on his gown as he was stepping out of his coach at his own door, and fell, breaking his arm. He lingered for a little while, but never recovered from the shock.

If Dean Swift is to be believed, all these appointments were made from political motives. He says, that "from the highest prelate to the lowest vicar, there were hardly ten clergymen throughout the whole kingdom, for more than nineteen years preceding 1733, who had not been either preferred entirely upon account of their declared affection to the Hanover line, or higher promoted as the due reward of the same merit." This is, let us hope, somewhat of an exaggeration. At the same time there was, no doubt, a good deal of truth in the assertion, and it must have had a most deleterious effect on the efficiency of the Church. Yet we can scarcely say that the time was not one of progress. In spite of non-residence, pluralities and carelessness, the work of God seems to have been carried on, and men were learning to realize more vividly their responsibilities as members of the Church. Often, no doubt, the cure of souls was left to some poor curate, while the rich incumbent spent his life elsewhere; but, perhaps the parishes were after all better off under the care of these simple-minded and poor but devoted men, than they would have been had the rectors themselves performed the duty which was so repugnant to their own tastes.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"STATE OF THE DIOCESE OF MEATH," UNDER BISHOP ELLIS.

THERE is a manuscript in the Public Record Office, Dublin, formerly preserved in the Registry of the Diocese of Meath, which gives an account of every parish in the diocese, with many interesting details. There is no date, but an official of the Record Office has written on the fly leaf the following note:— "This book seems to have been written about the year 1733, from the dates of the institution of some, and the death of others of the incumbents herein mentioned." Assuming this to be correct, we have in this return a remembrance of the brief tenure of the See of Meath by Bishop Welbore Ellis.

Doctor Ellis was an Englishman who had been promoted to the See of Kildare in 1705. On the death of Bishop Lambert in 1732, he was translated to the See of Meath, which, however, he held only till the first of January, 1734, when he died. While Bishop of Kildare he had held *in commendam* the Deanery of Christ Church, Dublin, and when he died, he was buried "with great ceremony" in that cathedral. "The funeral procession," we are told, "was composed of the boys of the Blue Coat Hospital, to which he had bequeathed one hundred pounds, singing psalms; forty-eight clergymen walking before the hearse, with scarves and hat bands; the crozier borne before the

King of Arms, who carried the mitre on a cushion; the hearse adorned with escutcheons, and attended by the coaches of the Duke of Dorset, Lord Lieutenant, the Primate, the Archbishops of Dublin and Cashel, and many other lords and persons of distinction. The appearance of the crozier and mitre gives a peculiar character to this solemnity."[1] This account is quoted from Bishop Mant's History, but it is to be regretted that the bishop gives us no information of what became afterwards of the crozier and mitre. This seems to be the only instance of their use that has been recorded in connection with the Diocese of Meath, at all events since the Reformation. The way in which Mant draws attention to them would seem to show that they were then, as now, unusual in the Irish Church, but the fact of their being used on this occasion suggests that they may have been used at other times, of which no record has been handed down.

It is probable that this "Account" was drawn up for the information of the bishop shortly after his appointment. It is very full in the description which it gives of the diocese, parish by parish, and enables us to obtain a fair idea of how things were progressing in those days.

The first thing that invites our attention is that the number of churches available for public worship had very much increased since the days of Bishop Dopping. It will be remembered that he reported only forty-three churches in repair, which were served by fifty-five clergymen. In Bishop Ellis's report we find that there are at least seventy churches in use, and that the number of clergymen had increased to eighty-one—this latter number being about the same

[1] Mant.

as the number of clergy in the diocese at the present time. This comparison enables us to measure to some extent how far the church had recovered from the long-continued troubles of the seventeenth century. In the more important parishes there had evidently been a good work of restoration going on. Of Athboy, for instance, we are told, " The church of this union, which is in the town of Athboy, is in very decent repair. 'Tis ceiled and the isle is flagged. There is a decent pulpit and reading desk, and the church is seated throughout, and has a handsome gallery besides. There is a font of stone, and the Communion Table decently railed in. There is a decent carpet (table-cover) for the Communion, a chalice and patin of plate, and flagon of pewter. There are likewise two bells. The churchyard in beautifull order, adorned with walks and evergreens, and planted with trees, and enclosed with a good stone wall." Of Mullingar he says : " The church is in very good order, and furnished with everything necessary for the celebration of Divine service. The chancel is in repair, but not used. 'Tis separated from the body of the church by a partition, against which the Communion Table is fixed. The churchyard is well enclosed with a stone wall, and planted with trees." This arrangement of not using the chancel is curious, but a similar state of things existed in Kells church up to the time of disestablishment. Nearly all the larger churches are described in much the same way, and we may, therefore, conclude they were on the whole in excellent condition.

Many of the smaller churches were equally well cared for. Stackallen, for instance, is thus described : " The roof and walls are good, the window cases are of stone, and very good and neat, and the inside of the

church is in most decent order. 'Tis ceiled and flagged and wainscoted. There is a decent pulpit and reading desk, and convenient seats throughout. There is a most beautiful table of polished marble for the Communion, handsomely railed in, and the floor boarded and raised. There is a font of marble, and a chalice, patin, and flagon of silver. There is likewise a good bell to the church, and the churchyard is well enclosed with a wall of stone and lime." Of Moynalty church a similar good report is given: "The church is handsome and lofty; the roof and walls firm and good. It is well flagged and furnished with decent seats, a font of stone, a Communion Table decently railed in, and the floor raised and boarded." In Clonard the church was in ruin, but the large chancel (evidently of the old abbey church) was used instead of it. "It is ceiled and flagged, and has galleries, besides a decent Communion and altar piece. The whole inside of the chancel is very beautiful and convenient."

The record is not quite so good in every case. Enniskeen was then, as now, an important parish. It had fifty-two families of church people, and fifty-four families of "Protestant dissenters." The church is thus described: "The church is roofed, the walls and timber good. It is slated, but in some places stripped by the winds to which 'tis much exposed. 'Tis very spacious, but intirely naked. There was a pulpit, but taken down by some former curate as being too small. No reading desk. Only one seat, and the whole floor of the church a dirty earthen floor." The bishop was himself in receipt of the tithes of this parish, and we might have expected that he would have seen that it was kept in decent order, but it was situated on the confines of the diocese, and apparently

was more or less forgotten. A few other churches, mostly in small parishes, are spoken of as in bad condition. For example, Nobber church was " not in extraordinary repair ; " Balsoon was " indecent ; " Galtrim was " not very tolerable ; " Tara " not extraordinary nor in extraordinary repair ; " Rathcore church was " in repair, but not very decent ; " Killochonnigan had a " bad church and thatched ; " Rathmolyon church was " in repair, but not very decent within ; " Killallon, " thatched and in bad order ; " Castlerickard church was in " sorry order ; " Leney was " in very indifferent repair, a dirty earthen floor, the Communion table not railed in, no utensils." One is tempted by the quaint way in which these faults are described to quote largely, but the real fact is that the number of churches thus condemned is after all comparatively small. Taken all round, it may be said that the churches were in tolerable repair.

As to church furniture, the most complete account is that given of the parish of Kells. " The Communion table is railed in, but the place is too scanty, and admits but a very small number of communicants. There is a decent carpet, and fair linen cloth ; a silver chalice and patin, and two flagons of pewter ; a stone font, a surplice, a Bible, two Common Prayer Books, a Book of Canons, a book wherein are registered the christenings, marriages and burials, and another wherein are entered the acts of the vestry ; there are convenient boxes for collecting the alms." In nearly all the churches the presence or absence of a " carpet " is noted. The word is not used in the sense in which we now employ it, but in the obsolete sense of a table cloth. We still speak of a thing being " on the carpet," when we mean that it is under discussion. The

allusion is, of course, not to a carpet such as covers our floors, but to the cloth cover of a council table. A great many of the churches, though otherwise well provided, were without a carpet, and in this connection it is interesting to note that Fuller refers to a similar want in some of the English churches when he tells his readers that "a Communion table will not catch cold with wanting a rich carpet." In Meath it was only the principal churches that were thus provided. At Laracor (Dean Swift's church), they were "furnished with all conveniences, except a surplice and carpet." That the former should be wanting in the parish of so good a churchman is surprising, but there is reason to suspect that the use of the surplice was often omitted in those days.

The Communion vessels were in a few cases of silver or plate, but for the most part they seem to have been of pewter. In comparatively recent days these pewter vessels were discarded, and their place was taken by the very inferior plated ware supplied by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. As a result, there is scarcely a vestige of pewter still retained in the diocese. Had the old vessels been preserved they would now be of great value, but they seem to have been cast aside as utterly worthless.

In several churches the provision for the celebration of Holy Communion was exceedingly poor and inadequate. At Syddan the flagon and chalice were of block tin. At Knockmark there was "no Communion table nor place railed in for it, nor raised, no linen or carpet, nor flagon; there is a chalice of pewter." Duleek was even worse. "No Communion table nor place railed in for it, nor is there any flagging or flooring in the place where the table should stand, nor elsewhere in the church, saving in the seats, and nothing

appears but the common earth ; no utensils for the Communion." Leney was in just as bad a case. " The Communion table not railed in ; no utensils."

At Galtrim they had " no utensils for the celebration of the Lord's Supper except a chalice of cocoa nut tipped with silver." This seems to have been a unique form of chalice, and the reader will be interested to learn that while this history was being written the relic has been discovered, and is now restored to the parish. It had long been lost, but was preserved in private keeping, and the tradition handed down with it that it had at one time belonged to a church in the neighbourhood of Trim. It finally came into the possession of Doctor Minchin, then residing in Kells, who set enquiries on foot with a view of discovering to what church it formerly belonged. On the facts, as disclosed in Bishop Ellis's Report, being brought under his notice, Doctor Minchin very generously restored it to the Parish of Galtrim, and it is now in the custody of the rector of that parish. The stem of the chalice, which is made of ebony, is somewhat damaged, but the " silver tip " is perfect, and the vessel is otherwise in excellent condition.

Services in the town parishes were held twice on Sundays, at one of which a sermon was preached, also on Wednesdays and Fridays, and on holidays. This is stated to have been the use at Kells, Trim, and Mullingar. At Athlone there was daily service as well as twice on Sundays. In a few of the country parishes there were two services every Sunday, but in most of them only one, much as is the case at present. According to Swift's biographers, he used to have service at Laracor on Wednesdays and Fridays, and it was at one of these week-day services that he is said to have begun the service by saying, " Dearly beloved

Roger," instead of the usual "Dearly beloved brethren," addressing himself to the parish clerk, who was the only member of the congregation. Bishop Ellis's Report, however, makes no mention of these week-day services at Laracor, and we may perhaps conclude that they were also held in other country parishes throughout the diocese, although no notice of the fact is taken in this return. At Duleek, divine service was celebrated only every second Sunday. On the alternate Sundays, service was held in Mr. Mervyn's house, at the Naul, in the parish of Clonalvey. In Drogheda there was no service at Saint Mary's, although the church was kept in repair, and the parishioners used to go across the river to Saint Peter's.

Very little information is given as to the frequency of the celebrations of the Holy Communion. At Athlone mention is made of a "monthly Sacrament," and this may have been the rule for the town parishes. At Kilskyre, we are told, "The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is administered six times in the year." This may have been the custom in the country places. At all events, this is the only information that the Report gives.

There is but little told us as to the state of religious and secular education, and in the latter portion of the Report which deals with the western portion of the diocese, the subject is almost entirely ignored. In Kells, the children were catechized from Easter to Michaelmas. There was a Latin school kept by the parish clerk, who was always a clergyman, as the emoluments were considerable. There was also some provision for primary education: the archdeacon "paid for the schooling of about twenty-five boys and girls, and in a great measure cloathed them." We are also told that "there is a charity school in Athlone,

where thirty boys and girls are taught to read and write, and four of the boys are clothed by Dr. St. George. There is likewise a spinning school of twenty girls, encouraged by the Commissioners of the Linen Manufactory. Henry St. George Esqr., has given a house for the schoolmaster." At Banagher the Royal School was already in existence, and the work of teaching carried on, though the master was non-resident. The following is the account of it : " There was a free school appointed to be kept in the town of Banagher by King Charles the First, and an endowment of 285 acres of land granted by him for the school. The schoolmaster is James Cunningham, who is at present at Gibraltar, a chaplain in the army. He employs the incumbent as a substitute, and allows him £20 per annum annually." In the smaller parishes the only provision for education seems to have been the catechising of the children at certain seasons of the year. A few entries will give some idea of the amount of instruction that was given. In Moynalty, the incumbent catechized the children every Sunday in the afternoon for five months in the year. In Stackallen, the children were catechized every Sunday during Lent ; and in Kilberry, on every holy day during the summer season. Very much the same information is given about other parishes, though in many cases no mention is made of the subject. All this does not tell us much about the state of education. It shows, however, that the duty was not altogether neglected, and we may fairly conclude that in most parishes, if not in all, there was some provision made for catechizing the children.

An attempt had evidently been made, and with some success, to form unions, so that small adjoining parishes might be worked by the one incumbent.

The system of patronage, however, continued to put obstacles in the way, and in many cases it was found impossible to arrange things satisfactorily. For instance, we have a Mr. Fisher, who was rector of Stackallen and vicar of Danistown, but to get from the one to the other, he had to pass through the parishes of Paynestown and Kentstown; while the rector of Paynestown, on his part, had a couple of parishes intervening between it and Monktown and Skryne, which he also held. As for the rector of Kentstown, he was also curate of Athboy, a combination of duty that was quite impossible to perform. This last, therefore, comes more under the head of pluralities than of unsuitable unions. There were just a few such cases. Stafford Lightburn, Dean Swift's curate, was one, for he not only held the curacy of Laracor, but also the rectory of Churchtown in the County Westmeath. The Dean himself was another, as he continued to hold the parish of Laracor with some adjoining parishes after he had been appointed to the Deanery of Saint Patrick's. Anthony Dopping, son of the Bishop of Meath of the same name, and himself destined soon to become a bishop, held the rectory of Killucan together with the deanery and parish of Clonmacnoise. Of course it would have been impossible for him to serve both cures personally. There were a few other case like these, but at the same time, a manifest improvement had taken place since the days of Bishop Dopping.

An attempt was made by the bishops to enforce residence, and with that object in view two bills were introduced into the House of Lords in 1732, the one enforcing the building of glebe houses, and the other providing for the sub-division of large parishes. These were opposed with great vigour by the clergy, and

were eventually thrown out in the House of Commons. Swift was one of the leaders in the opposition, and spoke of them as "those two abominable bills for enslaving and beggaring the clergy, which took their birth from hell." It is hard to understand how two measures, which, at the present day, would pass almost without discussion, aroused at that time such a violent opposition.

The information which the Return gives as to the incomes of the clergy is very imperfect. The largest income given is that of the rector of Kells, who was also Archdeacon of Meath, and had £700 per annum. With this exception, there are no large incomes noted, and it would seem that £100 a year might be considered a fair average. Some went a good deal lower than this. The curate in charge of Killochonnigan, for example, had only £20. In most of the parishes, however, the information given does not enable us to say what the incomes really were, and in some cases there were glebe lands which may have added considerably to the value of the benefice.

There are a few items of incidental information scattered here and there through the Report which are some of them interesting. Speaking of Kilmainham Wood, we are told: "The parish has been but of late upon the books, nor have I been able to find any mention of it in any books or rolls which have come to my hands." It seems extraordinary that a parish should have become, as this seems to imply, in a sense derelict. No mention of the parish is made by Ussher, so that we may conclude that in his day it had been already forgotten; and the neglect continued until comparatively recent times. In 1790 the bishop consulted his chancellor as to how he should deal with the case. The impropriator, Lord Beaulie, was a

Roman Catholic, and while he received the tithes of the parish, he made no provision for the duty, and no vicar had been appointed for many years. After giving some advice on the subject, Doctor Radcliff adds: "The very last opinion I gave the morning I left town to Mr. Lowther, son of Johnny Lowther (as I heard), did I believe, relate to this subject. The case complains that there is no person to do occasional duties in a parish near Kells, and that until very lately Sir William Barker, who was tenant to the impropriator, paid twelve pounds a year to the curate of Kells for doing those occasional duties, but that, since the expiration of Sir William's lease, there had been a stoppage of payment, and Mr. Lowther desires to know whether he cannot stop payment of his own tithes, until some person shall be paid for the occasional duties."[2] Doctor Radcliff goes on to say that in his opinion Lord Beaulie could be compelled to pay this twelve pounds a year. No action, however, was taken, and in 1800 we learn that "tithes had not been paid for many years, because the patron was a Roman Catholic." Thus it would appear that at least for about two hundred years the parish had been left without any adequate provision for the cure of souls.

Nobber had been at one time one of the important towns in the County Meath, but evidently long before the time of which we are treating, it had fallen into decay. The rector used to hold, as attached to his living, the dignity of Archdeacon of Kells, and when that office was united to the bishopric, the bishop became rector of Nobber, and the incumbent had henceforth merely the position of perpetual curate appointed by the diocesan. The Report says:—

> There is no glebe in this parish, but his Grace the Lord

[2] MS. in Record Office, Dublin.

Primate has lands in it belonging to his see, whereby a curate or vicar may be furnished with glebe, which is absolutely necessary in this parish, being situated in a barbarous part of the country, and no tolerable accommodation to be had otherwise for a resident clergyman.

Navan was then, as now, without a glebe house and the incumbent was forced to procure a dwelling for himself as best he could. We are told that "the incumbent resided at first in the town of Navan, but since has removed to lodging in the country, which gives offence."

The following description of Taughmon church and parson is somewhat amusing:—

There is a church in repair with a steeple in this parish. It has a stone roof, which cracked from end to end, and lets in the rain. The inside is in very sorry order, and everything almost wanting. Christopher Dixon, a weak man, is curate. He used to live in the steeple. He could not be trusted with money, and the Bishop of Meath used to lay out yearly for him for diet and conveniencies the sum of £20. It is a very obscure place, and there is a very small congregation.

Notwithstanding his weakness, Mr. Dixon survived a long time, for in 1751 we find that a subscription was made among the bishops and clergy for his support, and a sum of £13 was expended, "£10 whereof to pay for board and lodging, and £3 to be laid out in buying cloaths and other necessarys."[3] He had in the meantime been relieved from the duty of his parish, for we find that John Parker was appointed to it in 1744. Taughmon church has still its stone roof, and the crack which Bishop Ellis notes remains as of old. The congregation, too, continues to be very small. Indeed of late the church has only been used for occasional services.

Our Report makes no mention of the now important

[3] MS. in Record Office, Dublin.

town of Tullamore, which indeed was at that time by no means such an important place as it afterwards became. There had been a chapel of ease there, but no mention of it is made in the present account. The parish to which it belonged (Durrow) comes in for only a very scanty notice. There is equally no mention of Moate, but the parish, Kilcleagh, is mentioned as united to Ballyloughloe. There is no intimation as to whether a church existed in the town of Moate, but from the fact that glebe lands were bestowed on Kilcleagh by Charles I., with a stipulation that a clergyman's residence was to be erected, we may perhaps conclude, that even then the importance of the place was recognized, and that the intention was that it should be made into a separate parish. This intention, however, like many others of the same kind, was not carried into effect until many years afterwards.

Except in the latter portions, the Return seems to have been very carefully compiled, and it marks for us the recovery of the Church after the miseries of the rebellion of 1641, the usurpation of Cromwell, and the attempted Romanizing of the Church under James II. After ninety years of such painful experiences, it speaks well for the Church that we find it so carefully organized, and on the whole so efficiently administered. There was still, no doubt, great room for improvement in many places, and the standard reached was very far from what would be deemed satisfactory in the present day. But once more we must judge things, not according to modern ideas, but according to the ideas that were then prevalent, and when we remember this, we cannot but admit that substantial progress had been made, and the way prepared for still greater progress in the future.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Glimpses of Church Life.

We have some interesting sources of information, of a different kind from any that have been so far available, which tell us about church life in the Diocese of Meath in the eighteenth century. First, we have the Life and Works of Dean Swift; then we have the Journal of John Wesley; and finally, the writings of Oliver Goldsmith. These three are sufficiently near in time to one another to justify us in taking them as descriptive of the same period.

Jonathan Swift was appointed to the livings of Laracor, Agher, and Rathbeggan in February, 1700. He had already had a parish in the north of Ireland, but he held it only for a short time, and it is doubtful if he ever resided in it, so that we may assume that whatever knowledge he possessed of an Irish country clergyman's life was derived from his experience as incumbent of a small parish in the Diocese of Meath. After his appointment he was in no hurry to take up the duty, but continued to live in Dublin, officiating as chaplain to Lord Berkeley, and in the following year he accompanied that nobleman to England. It was only in September, 1701, that he went into residence. From time to time he did not hesitate to absent himself for long periods. In 1702 he was for six months in England, and in 1708 he went away again, not returning for a year and eight months. After his appointment to the Deanery of Saint Patrick's Cathedral, he only

went occasionally to Laracor, and in his latter days he seems to have seldom visited his parish. Of course, he always employed a curate, so that the parish was not neglected, but, in view of his own action, it is hard to understand how he could write on the subject of non-residence, "I believe there is no Christian country upon earth where the clergy have less to answer for upon that article. I am confident there are not ten clergymen in the kingdom who, properly speaking, can be termed non-residents."

Swift's congregations were always small, seldom more than ten, and these, as he wittily puts it, "most gentle and all simple." That he found the place dull does not surprise us. It was not worse in this respect than many another country parish, but he was a man who loved to be in the thick of the fray. Writing to Vanessa, he says, "At my first coming, I thought I should have died with discontent, and was horribly melancholy while they were installing me." After a time he became more reconciled to his lot, and interested himself in the house and garden. He made friends among some of the neighbours, and was cheered by the companionship of Stella, for whom he rented a cottage in the immediate neighbourhood.

The parish of Laracor benefited considerably from the dean's liberality. He made considerable improvements in the dwelling house, and by purchase he added greatly to the lands, all of which he left to his successors free of any charge. He also acquired the tithes of what he calls the "parish" of Effernock, a district in the neighbourhood of Trim, and bequeathed it as an addition to the income of the benefice. At the time of disestablishment, unfortunately, no claim was made for these tithes as a "private endowment," for if this had been done there is little doubt but that the

parish would still be receiving the benefit of his generosity.

When we remember how he was thus associated with our diocese, we may fairly take his lines on *The Happy Life of a Country Parson* as descriptive of a Meath clergyman's life in his time. Like everything else that Swift wrote, it has its note of sarcasm, but on the whole the picture is not unpleasing.

> Parson, these things in thy possessing
> Are better than the bishop's blessing:
> A wife that makes conserves; a steed
> That carries double when there's need;
> October store, and best Virginia,
> Tythe-pig, and mortuary guinea;
> Gazettes sent gratis down, and frank'd,
> For which thy patron's weekly thank'd;
> A large concordance (bound long since);
> Sermons to Charles the First, when prince;
> A Chronicle of ancient standing;
> A Chrysostom, to smoothe thy band in;
> The Polyglott—three parts—my text,
> Howbeit,—likewise—now to my next,
> Lo, here the Septuagint—and Paul,
> To sum the whole—the close of all.
> He that hath these may pass his life,
> Drink with the squire, and kiss his wife;
> On Sundays preach, and eat his fill,
> And fast on Fridays, if he will;
> Toast Church and Queen, explain the news;
> Talk with churchwardens about pews;
> Pray heartily for some new gift,
> And shake his head at Doctor S——t.

Goldsmith, writing somewhat later, drew all his knowledge of a parson's life from the County Westmeath, where his father, and afterwards his brother, had their field of labour. The picture of the "village preacher" in the *Deserted Village*, is drawn with a more loving hand than that of Swift, but the

two descriptions are not incompatible. He was a man of modest means, just barely raised above want, but contented, and not at all, like Swift's parson, praying for some new gift.

> A man he was to all the country dear,
> And passing rich with forty pounds a year.
> Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
> Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change, his place.
> Unpractised he to fawn, or seek for power,
> By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour;
> Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,
> More skilled to raise the wretched than to rise.

The "forty pounds a year" that Goldsmith speaks of, seems to have been the regular pay of a curate at that time, and his own brother never got beyond it. It represented, of course, a good deal more than the same sum represents in the present day; still it left no room for extravagance, and necessitated a very simple and quiet life. Swift, in his "Letter to a Young Clergyman," says that young men newly ordained "if they be very fortunate, arrive in time to a curacy here in town, or else are sent to be assistants in the country, where they probably continue several years (many of them their whole lives) with thirty or forty pounds a year for their support, 'till some bishop, who happens to be not over-stocked with relations, or attached to favourites, or is content to supply his diocese without colonies from England, bestows upon them some inconsiderable benefice, when 'tis odds they are already encumbered with a numerous family."

Underlying both accounts is the assumption that promotion in the church went more by favour than by merit. That Swift makes such a complaint does not surprise us, as we know that he was always more or *less discon*tented, but Goldsmith, who was of a very

different disposition, gives us clearly to understand that if his parson had been "practised to fawn," and to adapt his teaching to the fashion of the hour, he might have obtained advancement for himself. It must have been disheartening to many a faithful worker to find himself continually passed over in favour of those who had more powerful friends. The grievance, however, was one of long standing, and we would be wrong in assuming that it was worse in those days than in the preceding time or in the time that was to follow.

Goldsmith dwells at considerable length on the benevolence and hospitality of the parson, on his ministry by the death bed, and on his friendly relationship with his parishioners, but he dismisses the subject of preaching in a single couplet:

> Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,
> And fools, who came to scoff, remained to pray.

We may probably conclude from this that preaching was not his strongest point, and we may perhaps generalize, and assume that the clergymen of the small country parishes were not as a general rule great orators, as indeed was not to be expected. There can be little doubt, however, that good preaching was very much appreciated, and that many of the clergy aimed at excellence in this respect. Swift dwells upon the subject very fully in his "Letter to a Young Clergyman," and the faults which he points out are mostly those that would be found amongst men that made some pretensions to oratory. He notes with approval that he has "lived to see Greek and Latin almost entirely driven out of the pulpit," but he deprecates the habit which still obtained of making quotations from ancient and modern authors, by way of displaying the erudition of the preacher, and he specially ridicules

the stock phrases by which such quotations were commonly introduced—"As Saint Austin excellently observes"—as "a late excellent prelate of our church," tells us—and the like. "Of no better stamp is your 'heathen philosopher,' and 'famous poet,' and 'Roman historian,' at least in common congregations, who will rather believe you on your own word than on that of Plato or Homer." He also warns his young friend against attacking heathen philosophy, which possibly he has never taken the trouble to understand, and against preaching against atheism to congregations whose minds have never been troubled with theological doubts. Such warnings, it is needless to remark, would be unnecessary if the popular style of preaching in that day was not lofty—perhaps one might say, stilted—in its character.

Incidentally, Swift lets us know that the usual length of a sermon in those days was half an hour. He also discusses the question as to whether a sermon should be read, or delivered without a manuscript, and he says that the whole body of the clergy would be against him, but the laity almost to a man on his side, in preferring the spoken sermon. "I cannot but think," he says, "that whatever is read differs as much from what is repeated without book as a copy does from an original." It is evident from this that written sermons were the rule, and extempore sermons the exception.

John Wesley, in his Journal, speaks more than once of the preaching in Athlone church, of which he seems to have highly approved. On Sunday, May 3rd, 1748, he writes: "At eleven we went to church, and heard a plain, useful sermon." On May 7th, 1749, he has the entry, "Athlone. The rector preached in the afternoon (though it is called morning service) a close

useful sermon on the Fear of God." And again, on June 11th, 1759, he writes, "We had an excellent sermon at church, on the Intercession of Christ." He does not seem to have expressed his opinion about the preaching in any other place in the diocese except Athlone, but we may gather from his observations that sound and thoughtful if not eloquent preaching was to be heard in the churches of Meath in his time.

Turning now from the clergy to the laity, the description which Goldsmith gives of the parishioners clustering round the vicar after the Sunday service recurs at once to the mind :—

> The service past, around the pious man,
> With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran ;
> E'en children followed with endearing wile,
> And plucked his gown, to share the good man's smile.
> His ready smile a parent's warmth expressed ;
> Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distressed ;
> To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,
> But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.

The congregation which thus showed its attachment to the pastor consisted of honest rustics. It is to be feared that some who thought more highly of themselves were very far from displaying the same estimable qualities. Even in such an abode of "innocence and ease" as Auburn is represented to have been, there were fools who came to the house of God merely to scoff. We can understand what this meant when we read Wesley's description of different churches. He says of Athlone, that he "had not seen one congregation ever in Ireland behave so ill at church, as that at Athlone, laughing, talking, and staring about, during the whole service." He was so accustomed to see the better class of people behave badly in church, that when they at all showed a serious disposition,

he mentions it as something unusual. "I preached," he says, "at Clara to a vast number of well-behaved people, although some of them came in their coaches, and were (I was informed) of the best quality in the country. How few of these would have returned empty if they had heard the word of God, not out of curiosity merely, but from a real desire to do His will." At another time, he says, "I preached at Tyrrelspass with a peculiar blessing from God, though many persons of fortune were in the congregation. But the poor and the rich are His." And once more, again with regard to Tyrrelspass, he says, "Preached at 8 and 12 (there being no service in the church). A heap of fine gay people came in their post chaises to the evening preaching. I spoke very plainly, but the words seemed to fly over them. Gallio cared for none of these things."

This inattentive and indecent behaviour at church seems to have arisen from a spirit of infidelity which was then fashionable, and which was accompanied by a loose kind of living. Wesley speaks of cursing, swearing, and drinking, as "fashionable wickedness." Swift tells us that the so-called free-thinkers were to be found amongst those in the country who were "oppressing their tenants, tyrannizing over the neighbourhood, cheating the vicar, talking nonsense, and getting drunk at the sessions." He thinks that nothing was gained by the "frequent custom of preaching against atheism, deism, free thinking, and the like, as young divines are particularly fond of doing, especially when they exercise their talent in churches frequented by persons of quality," for, first of all, "persons under those imputations are generally no great frequenters of churches," and even if they did come, they would not be convinced, for "reasoning will never make a

man correct an ill opinion which by reasoning he never acquired." He thinks that education was at a very low ebb among the better classes, and tells us, "that you will hardly find a young person of quality with the least tincture of knowledge, at the same time that the clergy were never more learned, or so scurvily treated."

When Swift took up his residence at Laracor, he found both church and parsonage in a state of dilapidation. He, however, at once set about repairing them. There were probably many other churches in the same condition, but a better order of things was coming in, and before many years had elapsed the type of sanctuary that Meath could boast was that which Goldsmith commemorates when he speaks of—

> The decent church that topt the neighbouring hill.

The interior arrangement of the churches was somewhat different from that which is usual at present. The prayer desk, with the parish clerk's desk in front of it, commonly occupied the centre of the south wall. Behind this the pulpit stood in all the smaller churches, but in some of the more important, it was a movable structure, mounted on wheels, which was rolled into the centre aisle when required for use, and at other times relegated to a less prominent position. This was the use in Athlone Church,[1] and probably in some others, as it was not an unusual arrangement at the time. The pews were large, and often "built"[2] at the expense of the owners. Then, as now, they were the occasion of frequent disputes,[3] and, as Swift points out, formed the chief subject of discussion between the clergyman and his churchwardens. It was not always

[1] Athlone Vestry Book. [2] Kells Vestry Book.
[3] *MS. Opinions of Counsel*, Record Office, Dublin.

easy to keep them in decent order, for, when any important person in the parish died, it was customary to have the interment within the walls of the church. This, besides being insanitary, often caused damage to the pews, and must have rendered it exceedingly difficult to preserve the church furniture from excessive wear and tear. In Kells the vestry passed a resolution that—

> Whereas several pughs in said church have been greatly injur'd by burying corps in said church, it is therefore enacted that for the future, before the ground be opened or any pugh taken down, the sum of two pounds five shillings be deposited in the hands of the church wardens, in order to repair said damage, and the remainder, if any, to be disposed of as the ministers, church wardens, and Protestant parishioners shall think proper. [4]

It was only at a much later date that such interments were prohibited.

The churchwardens and vestrymen concerned themselves with many subjects that are now considered to be altogether beyond their province. They provided the stocks, and seem to have had the power of inflicting that penalty, which they awarded to such offences as playing ball against the church walls,[5] and it was their favourite remedy against the tramp nuisance. Portion of the stocks of Navan is still to be seen outside the court-house, a quaint reminder of an obsolete mode of punishment; and a much more perfect specimen, quite capable of being still used, has lately been purchased by the Rev. Hamlet McClenaghan, Rector of Dunshaughlin. Formerly it had belonged to the village, and had passed into the possession of a neighbouring farmer.

The treatment of vagrants and beggars must have

[4] Kells Vestry Book. [5] *Ibid.*

occupied a good part of the churchwardens' attention, and the old vestry books have many curious entries dealing with this subject. When a new resident came to the parish, if he had no visible means of subsistence, security might be demanded from him that he would not become chargeable on the charity funds.[6] The case of a vagrant was different. For him they had no mercy. He was either put in the stocks, or else received a whipping, and was sent on his way. In Kells, and probably in other places as well, they had a parish officer called the "whip beggar," or "ban beggar," whose duty it was "to keep off all beggars and poor people out of the parish." How he performed this duty is sufficiently indicated by the name of his office. He received a salary and a coat, and it was resolved that if he failed in his duty, the coat was to be taken from him and the salary stopped.[7] They had a similar officer at Athlone, but in that parish he was called the "bellower."[8] The ordinary mendicants, at all events in the towns, were provided with badges. These were metal plates, about three inches square, with the name of the parish, and a number. Those who were thus decorated were allowed to solicit alms in the neighbourhood. A similar custom prevailed about this time in many places both in England and Ireland. A well-known letter written by Dean Swift advocates the adoption of badges for the beggars of Dublin.

Other duties that fell to the lot of church wardens, were the providing for foundling children, who were either put out to nurse, or sent to the Foundling Hospital in Dublin; the providing of coffins for paupers, the care of the streets, especial mention being made of the duty of keeping them free from

[6] Ballyboy Vestry Book. [7] Kells Vestry Book.
[8] Athlone Vestry Book.

strolling pigs ;[9] and a variety of other things that are now looked after in other ways.

The funds required for all these works, as well as for the repair of the fabric of the church and the payment of church officers, were raised by a cess levied at the Easter vestry. As Roman Catholics had to pay this tax, and yet none of them were allowed to vote at the vestry meetings, it naturally caused frequent resentment. Often it was raised with difficulty ; sometimes it could not be raised at all.[10] Like many other things arranged for us by the English government, it helped to prejudice the people of the country against our Church.

The Temperance movement is generally regarded as belonging to the nineteenth century. According to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, the first temperance society dates from 1808, and was formed in Greenfield, Saratoga County, New York. New Ross is claimed by some to be the birth place of the first temperance society in Europe, and it was founded in 1829 by the Reverend George Whitmore Carr.[11] It may be well, therefore, to note that long before either of these dates, there was a movement of this kind in the Diocese of Meath, and though in doing so we come to a later date than the other events chronicled in this chapter, it may well take its place among our " Glimpses of Church Life."

As early as 1771 the subject of temperance reform had attracted attention in the country, for in that year legislation was proposed which went beyond the wildest dreams of the present day. In that year a bill was introduced into Parliament to suspend whiskey distilling, " which was demoralizing the country." [12]

[9] Slane Vestry Book. [10] Ardnurcher Vestry Book.
[11] Rev. J. F. M. ffrench in *Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette*, Jan. 28, 1898.
[12] Froude, *English in Ireland*.

In this case England interfered, because of the loss that would come to the revenue, and the bill had to be abandoned. Some time after that, in 1787, a meeting was held in Saint Mary's parish, Dublin, which formed itself into an organization for the promotion of temperance. The year following the movement was taken up in Meath, and a meeting was held in Kells, at which the following resolutions were passed :—

Resolved.—That we highly approve of the resolutions entered into on the 2nd of April last by our brethren of the metropolis and that we will to the utmost of our power promote their patriotic intention, by the most spirited exertion to prevent the destructive practice of spirit drinking, so fatally prevalent among the lower ranks of society.

Resolved.—That as we are sensible of the influence which example has on the minds of the common people, we will in every instance discountenance the horrid vice of drunkenness, as well by punishing those who vend spirituous liquors illegally, as by refusing employment and protection to every person who shall continue in the practice of intoxication ; and we have the strongest persuasion that our brethren of the neighbouring parishes will, upon due consideration, see the indispensible necessity of adopting these or similar resolutions, for the purpose of establishing civilization and good order among their poorer fellow creatures, who only want instruction and encouragement to become good and useful members of society, relying on the wisdom and humanity of an enlightened legislature for further assistance in promoting the real happiness of this country, by destroying the principal source of idleness and immorality. [13]

Copies of these resolutions were published in the Dublin newspapers, and the temperance society in Dublin passed a resolution of approbation and sympathy. The leader in this movement, as far as Meath is concerned, was Mr. Michael Tisdall, of Charlesfort, whose descendants are still among the most faithful members of our church in the diocese.

[13] Kells Vestry Book.

The Kells vestry, at a subsequent meeting, passed a resolution of thanks to him "for his charitable good services in suppressing drunkenness and all other disorderly practices," from which we may conclude that the organization, though it seems to have been short lived, was enabled in some measure to accomplish the object for which it was formed.

As to the bishops, we have little information as to how they performed their duties, but as we have seen, they were supposed to have been more active than they had been in former times. Swift, as is well known, had not a very exalted opinion of the episcopal bench. He is particularly hard on Bishop Evans, and if his account is to be trusted—a somewhat doubtful point, when an enemy is concerned—that prelate was unfair and tyrannical to those who were of a different party from himself. It would appear that some unpleasantness arose between them at one of the first visitations which the bishop held, and in the following year Swift refused to attend the visitation, sending a proxy instead. Bishop Evans refused to receive his proxy, and thereupon Swift sent him the following letter :—

May 22, 1719.

To the Bishop of Meath.

I had an express sent to me yesterday by some friends, to let me know that you refused to accept my proxy, which I think was in legal form, and with all the circumstances it ought to have. I was likewise informed of some other particulars relating to your displeasure for my not appearing. You may remember, if you please, that I promised last year never to appear again at your visitations ; and I will most certainly keep my word if the law will permit me ; not from any contempt of your lordship's jurisdiction, but that I would not put you under the temptation of giving me injurious treatment, which no wise man, if he can avoid it, will receive above once from the same person.

I had the less apprehension of any hard dealing from your lordship, because I have been more than ordinary officious in my respects to you, from your first coming over. I waited on you as soon as I knew of your landing. I attended on you on your first journey to Trim. I lent you a useful book relating to your diocese; and repeated my visits, till I saw you never intended to return them. And I could have no design to serve myself, having nothing to hope or fear from you. I cannot help it, if I am called of a different party from your lordship's, but that circumstance is of no consequence with me, who respect good men of all parties alike.

I have already nominated a person to be my curate, and did humbly recommend him to your lordship to be ordained, which must be done by some other bishop, since you are pleased, as I am told, to refuse it, and I am apt to think you will be of opinion that, when I have a lawful curate, I shall not be under the necessity of a personal appearance, from which I hold myself excused by another station. If I shall prove to be mistaken, I declare my appearance will be extremely against my inclinations. However, I hope that in such a case, your lordship will please to remember in the midst of your resentments that you are to speak to a clergyman, and not to a footman.

I am, your Lordship's obedient
Humble servant,
JON. SWIFT. [14]

It does not say much for the ecclesiastical discipline of those days to find that Swift could threaten his diocesan that if he refused to ordain the curate that he nominated, he would be able to find another bishop willing to do so. As a matter of fact, however, the question did not arise, for we find that this same year Stafford Lightburne was ordained in Meath for the curacy of Laracor; so that the bishop cannot have been as unreasonable as Swift represents him to be. But this concession on the part of the bishop did not mend matters, for the enmity continued until his

[14] Mant.

lordship was removed by death. Two years later, Evans held another visitation, and on that occasion Swift wrote the following letter to the Reverend Thomas Wallis, Vicar of Athboy, who had agreed to act as his proxy :—

Dublin, May 18, 1721.

SIR,

I had your letter, and the copy of the bishop's circular enclosed, for which I thank you ; and yet I will not pretend to know anything of it, and hope you have not told anybody what you did. I should be glad enough to be at the visitation, not out of any love to the business of the person, but to do my part in preventing any mischief ; but in truth my health will not suffer it, and you, who are my proxy, may safely give it upon your veracity. I am confident the bishop would not be dissastisfied with wanting my company, and yet he may give himself airs when he finds I am not there. I now employ myself in getting you a companion to cure your spleen.

I am,

Your faithful, humble servant,

J. S.

When the visitation actually took place the bishop "gave himself airs," as Swift suspected he might do, and refused to receive the Dean's proxy. Thereupon Swift sent him the following vigorous letter :—

MY LORD,

I have received an account of your lordship's refusing to admit my proxy at your visitation, with several circumstances of personal reflections on myself, although my proxy attested my want of health ; to confirm which, and to lay before you the justice and Christianity of your proceeding, above a hundred persons of quality and distinction can witness that since Friday, the 26th of May, I have been tormented with an ague, in as violent a manner as possible, which still continues, and forces me to make use of another hand in writing to you.

At the same time I must be plain to tell you, that if this accident had not happened, I should have used all my endeavours to avoid your visitation, upon the publick promise I made you three years ago, and the motives which occasioned it; because I was unwilling to bear any more very injurious treatment and appellations given to my brethren or myself, and by the grace of God, I am still determined to absent myself on the like occasion, so far as I can possibly be dispensed with by any law, while your lordship is in that diocese and I a member of it. In which resolution I could not conceive but your lordship would be easy, because, although my presence might possibly contribute to your real, at least future interest, I was sure it could not be to your present satisfaction.

If I had the happiness to be acquainted with any one clergyman in the diocese of your lordship's principles, I should have desired him to represent me, with hopes of better success, but I wish you would sometimes think it convenient to distinguish men as well as principles, and not to look upon every person who happens to owe you canonical obedience as if———.

I have the honour to be ordinary over a considerable number of as eminent divines as any in this kingdom, who owe me the same obedience as I owe to your lordship, and are equally bound to attend my visitation; yet, neither I nor any of my predecessors, to my knowledge, did ever refuse a regular proxy.

I am only sorry that you, who are of a country famed for good nature, have found a way to unite the hasty passion of your own countrymen with the long, sedate resentment of a Spaniard; but I have an honourable hope that this proceeding has been more owing to party than complexion.

I am,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most humble servant,

JON. SWIFT.[15]

Whatever may have been the merits of this contention, and it seems impossible for us now to judge of them, we can scarcely help sympathizing with the bishop who had to deal with such a bitter-tongued opponent among his clergy.

[15] Mant.

When Bishop Downes succeeded Evans, Swift gave him a most cordial reception, as if to mark the contrast between him and his predecessor. On this point, the bishop writes :—

I spent all last week in or near Trim. On Wednesday I held my visitation, and on Thursday a synod there, and through the unexpected goodness of the Dean of Saint Patrick's was made perfectly easy on both days, as if he had a mind to atone, by his uncommon civilities to me, for the uncommon trouble he had given to my predecessor. The dean went with me on Friday to visit Arbracken, and to lay out the ground for my new house and gardens ; but we returned *re infecta*, not having allowed time for so necessary a work.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Penal Laws.

The eighteenth century was pre-eminently the age of those enactments against the Church of Rome, which are known as the Penal Laws. This seems a convenient place, therefore, to consider what light is thrown on the subject by the history of the Diocese of Meath.

It is somewhat unfortunate that the expression "penal laws" should be used in this restricted sense, as it suggests that they were the outcome of Protestant bigotry and intolerance, whereas the real truth is that they were the consistent following out of a policy which had been adopted by the English in Ireland from the days of Henry II. There were penal laws before religion had become a factor dividing men into opposite camps, and the enactments of those earlier days, made by Roman Catholic monarchs, and sometimes with the direct sanction of the Church, were far more severe than the most oppressive of those which a Protestant government imposed in later years. When the Normans conquered England they treated the Saxons with all that oppression which was then regarded as the right of a conqueror, but they made no penal laws—there was equal justice for both parties. And the result was as beneficial to the Normans as it was to the Saxons, for it made their kingdom stable, and united the realm into a homogeneous whole. But they displayed no such wisdom in their treatment of

Ireland. From the first they had one code of justice for themselves, and another for the original inhabitants of the country. An Englishman in Ireland, if he were disloyal, as many of them were, was a "rebel;" but the Irishman who was making common cause with him was not a rebel, but an "enemy." A rebel might deserve punishment, but at all events, he had the law to which he could appeal, and he could not be condemned without some sort of trial; but an enemy had no such rights. It was in this spirit that Ireland was governed, and the evil tradition was handed down from one generation to another. This tradition was the true genesis of the penal laws. If there had been no question of religion the laws would, in all probability, have been enacted all the same. They would have been differently expressed, and would have been directed against "Irish enemies," instead of "Irish papists," but in every other respect there would have been no difference.

In treating of this subject, there is one difficulty which presents itself at the outset, and that is, how to state the case in fairness, and yet not appear to be an apologist for this kind of legislation. Members of our Church have no inducement to defend the penal laws, for though directed against Roman Catholics, it is to Protestantism that they have done the greatest injury. The politicians who framed them were not men whose object was the welfare of the Church—they had quite other ends in view. Nor were Irish churchmen unable to see through the designs of their rulers. King, then Bishop of Derry, and afterwards Archbishop of Dublin, expresses his opinion very freely on the subject. He says, "One would think that the world were somewhat concerned about religion, for of three bills that passed last, one was to prohibit

marrying with Papists, and another to banish regulars, and the third, for damning the Articles of Limerick, was on pretence of weakening the Popish interest; but after all there is not the least consideration of religion at the bottom, and we must learn from this, not to judge according to appearance." This was written in 1697, when penal laws were beginning to be enforced. In 1720, when he had many years trial of them, he writes again. "If one would observe the state of religion in these kingdoms in our own time, that is since the restoration of the royal family, perhaps it will appear that the Church never gained more true friends than when the civil power gave her doctrine and worship least encouragement, nor lost more the hearts and affections of her people than when seeming most encouraged."

If we are to sit in judgment on the penal laws, there are three points that in all fairness should be kept in mind. First, it ought to be remembered that we should not judge the eighteenth century by the standard of the twentieth. The reign of Queen Anne is after all not so very long ago, but the world has progressed wonderfully in some directions since then, and in no way more remarkably than in the recognition of the right of religious liberty. The penal laws were frankly and openly intolerant; but what nation was there at that time which had even the faintest idea of toleration? The case of warfare supplies a parallel. Judged by the standard of to-day, the heroes of that age were simply brutes. They sacked towns, they committed all kinds of outrages, they conformed to none of the rules of what is called "civilized warfare." But, very rightly, we do not blame the soldiers of that age. We blame the age itself. The time of humanity in warfare had not yet

come, and mankind had still to learn the lesson. The same is true with regard to toleration in matters of religion. It also was a lesson that had not yet been learnt. When, therefore, we condemn the penal laws, we should remember that the condemnation is merited more by the age that produced them than by the actual authors that enacted them.

Another point to be borne in mind is that these laws had a political as well as a religious aspect, and that a supposed political necessity underlay every one of them. The Church of Rome at that time identified itself with the cause of the Stuarts, in opposition to the reigning dynasty. The Roman Catholic bishops of Ireland were appointed by the Pope on the nomination of the Pretender. Every appointment, therefore, was an act of hostility to the reigning monarch, and invited the retaliation which was embodied in these laws. At the Revolution there were Protestant non-juring bishops and clergy, who refused to acknowledge the Prince of Orange as their lawful sovereign, and these were deposed without any more ado. It was in exactly the same spirit that the Roman Catholic bishops and clergy were treated.

It is remarkable how much this aspect of the case is misrepresented by some writers, who would have us believe that the penal laws were purely acts of religious persecution. The greatest sufferings under these laws is said to have been after the year 1709, when the Roman priests were required to take the oath of abjuration. Concerning this oath, Cogan, in his *Diocese of Meath*, makes the astounding assertion that "by the oath of abjuration the priest was ordered to swear that the sacrifice of the Mass and the invocation of the Blessed Virgin and the saints were damnable and idolatrous. In other words,

the priest was ordered to apostatize, or fly for his life." Where he obtained this information it is impossible to say, but he evidently made the assertion without taking the trouble to read the terms of the oath itself. The only explanation that suggests itself is that he confounds this oath with another which, in the time of Cromwell, was imposed on those who professed to be converts, as a test of their sincerity. What the priests objected to in this oath of abjuration was the clause, "I do solemnly and sincerely declare that I do believe in my conscience that the person pretended to be Prince of Wales during the life of the late King James, and, since his decease, taking upon himself the style and title of King of England, by the name of James III., hath not any right or title whatever to the crown of this realm." We may have a great deal of sympathy with men who could not see their way to make a declaration such as this, but we must recognize that the difficulty was altogether political, and we cannot feel astonished that such men were regarded with disfavour by the power which they refused to acknowledge. And they were not the only sufferers. The Protestant non-jurors were in exactly the same case, with this important difference, that it was not at all likely that the non-jurors would take up arms against the crown. We may therefore have great sympathy alike with Roman Catholics and non-jurors, and at the same time not be prepared to say that they were unjustly treated.

The third point to be remembered is that a distinction should be made between the actual provisions of the law and the way in which it was administered. The penal laws, being on the statute book, could be enforced in times of emergency, when there was danger of an attempt being made to restore the Stuart line

At other times they were mostly allowed to remain in abeyance. The words of Edmund Burke, in speaking of the penal code, have often been quoted. He said, "It had a vicious perfection—full of coherence and consistency, well digested and well disposed in all its parts. It was a machine of wise and elaborate contrivance, and as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment, and degradation of a people, and the debasement in them of human nature itself, as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man." The history of the diocese of Meath shows that this statement—however theoretically true it may have been,—was as a description of the practical working of the scheme altogether incorrect. The code, in its application at all events, was anything but perfect and complete. There were undoubtedly cases of hardship and injustice. Many Roman Catholic priests, especially among the "seculars," desired nothing more than to be left in peace to fulfil their spiritual duties amongst their flocks, but the law made no distinction, and they sometimes found themselves involved in the condemnation which was merited by some of their confreres. The law put a weapon into the hands of evilly disposed persons which could be used for the persecution of their Roman Catholic neighbours; but those who took advantage of the evil facilities thus afforded were regarded with disfavour by those around, and by none more so than by members of the Irish Church. It is something to the credit of Irish churchmen that there never were wanting amongst them those who were ready to help in evading these severe enactments. In Meath, at all events, when a Roman Catholic priest found it necessary to hide himself, he generally found his place of refuge in the house of a Protestant.

To understand how happily imperfect and incomplete the Penal code was in its administration, we may put some facts in apposition. The closing years of the seventeenth century, just after the defeat of King James, are said to have been some of the worst in the history of Romanism in Ireland. Cogan says, "The position of the Catholics of Ireland was then wretched in the extreme, and perhaps with the exception of Cromwell's merciless reign, there is no parallel in our ecclesiastical annals to the miseries endured under King William, and the last of the Stuarts, Queen Anne." There is some reason for these strong statements, for in 1697 an Act was passed by which "all popish archbishops, bishops, vicars-general, deans, jesuits, monks, friars, and all Papists exercising ecclesiastical jurisdiction, were required to leave the kingdom before the first of May, 1698, on pain of being kept in prison till sent out of the country: and should any of them venture to return, they were to be adjudged guilty of high treason." This certainly seems to be sweeping enough, and is an example of the "vicious perfection" to which Burke refers. A historian, if he were writing of any other country but Ireland, might well give this as his authority for describing the Roman Catholics of that day as a people deprived of their pastors by an oppressive law. This then is our first fact. Now, let us place another fact beside it. The Diocese of Meath, so far from being deprived of its pastors, had in it twice as many Roman Catholic priests as there were Protestant clergymen, and was nearly as fully manned then as it is at the present moment.

There are now in the Diocese of Meath one hundred and thirty-five Roman Catholic clergy. In 1698, a year after the act in question had been passed, there

were one hundred and twelve, of whom sixty-four were "seculars," and forty-eight "regulars." Nor can it be replied that these numbers represent what the strength of the diocese was before the legislation took effect, and that there may have been an almost immediate diminution in these numbers; for we have another account a few years later, and we find that in 1704, when there was just enough time for the act to have wrought havoc with all the ecclesiastical arrangements, the number of the clergy, instead of diminishing, had actually increased. The sixty-four secular clergy had become ninety-three, registered and recognized by the government.[1] The number of regulars is not given, but allowing that it may have been considerably reduced, the increase of the other class would probably more than make up for the deficiency. And even if there were no others than the ninety-three, known and registered, the diocese would be very far indeed from being spiritually destitute. We therefore see that the historian who would take the Act of Parliament as his reliable authority, would be altogether astray as to the facts of the case. He might possibly dwell on the vicious perfection and completeness which enumerated so many ecclesiastical officers that no loophole of escape was left, but the perfection after all would be only imaginary, and the real truth would be altogether different from the conclusions that he would naturally draw from the words of the statute.

As the reign of Queen Anne advanced the penal code grew in intensity, and it perhaps reached its climax in 1709, when the priests were required to take the oath of abjuration. By the Act of that year, informers were encouraged to betray Romish ecclesias-

[1] Cogan, *Diocese of Meath*, vol. ii., p. 153.

tics, and fifty pounds were to be given for the apprehension and conviction of an archbishop, bishop, or vicar general; twenty pounds for a friar; and ten pounds for a schoolmaster. We might naturally conclude from a law like this that at such a time it would have been impossible to appoint a new bishop. But, once more, such a conclusion would be altogether wrong. It was exactly this juncture that was chosen for the appointment of a Roman Catholic Bishop of Meath. The See had been for some years vacant, and had been governed by a vicar general. The last occupant, Doctor Tyrrell, who had been bishop in the time of James II., had been a very militant churchman. He was present at the battle of the Boyne, lived in camp with the soldiers for some time afterwards, and was in Limerick during the siege. Shortly after this he died, and it is not surprising that the authorities of the Church deemed it prudent not to appoint a successor until the remembrance of his warlike exploits had to some extent passed away. The remarkable point is that the time deemed suitable for such an appointment was the moment when the penal laws are supposed to have been at their very worst, and when, if they had been really enforced, such an appointment would have been impossible.

The prelate who was thus appointed was Doctor Luke Fagan, who afterwards became Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. A few years after his consecration to Meath, some busybody brought the case before the courts, but the proceedings that followed only showed how easily the law could be evaded, and that the authorities were evidently only too ready to connive at the evasion.

There was a certain amount of evidence taken at Mullingar, but the Deputy Clerk of the Crown omitted

to enter the examinations in the judge's book of bills, and in consequence, no action was taken and no decree made. The clerk was brought before the House of Lords to answer for his neglect, but, on expressing his regret, and begging pardon of the House, his offence was condoned, and the incident came to an end. The clerk who thus conveniently forgot his duty was almost certainly a Protestant, and we may be quite sure that he would have been more vigilant if he was not well aware that the Protestant magistrates were at his back. The House of Lords too, manifestly considered his offence to be only venial. The whole incident illustrates well the point that we are insisting on : that the enactments of the law and the administration of it were two very different things.

After the death of Queen Anne the penal laws continued to be in force, but were administered with rigour which diminished as the time went on. The danger of a Jacobite rising grew less and less, and the Roman Catholic clergy showed a disposition to accept the inevitable, and to acquiesce in the rule of the House of Brunswick. Towards the middle of the century, a meeting of bishops was convened by the Bishop of Meath, and a manifesto put forth explaining how the spiritual obligations of Roman Catholics were perfectly reconcilable with their temporal allegiance.[2] These circumstances rendered the existence of penal laws less necessary. In 1743 there was, for a short time, a revival of the old severity, in consequence of the rumour that an invasion of the country by the French was intended. It soon, however, passed away. A priest from Meath celebrated Mass in an old house in Cook Street, Dublin, and so great was the crush, that the floor gave way, and several of the worshippers

[2] Cogan, *Diocese of Meath*, vol. ii., p. 165.

were killed. This occurrence seems to have brought it home to the minds of people that the method of repression was as unworthy as it was ineffectual, and accordingly the laws were immediately after this very much relaxed. Towards the end of the century the Romanists had in practice all the liberty that they desired, though it was not for many years that the penal code was finally repealed. Occasional outbursts of bigotry and intolerance, no doubt, there were from time to time, but they were never very serious, and the Roman Catholics easily managed to hold their own. In 1779, when Doctor Plunkett was appointed Roman Catholic Bishop of Meath, it is said that some of the Protestants of Navan were determined that no popish bishop would be allowed to live in that town, but Plunkett simply defied them, and overcame their opposition without any difficulty.

Besides the coercive methods of the penal code, there were other and less objectionable methods employed for the conversion of the Roman Catholics. In 1709, while Parliament was devising means for banishing Romish ecclesiastics, Convocation was discussing a more excellent way of reaching the people of the country. It was agreed that the Bible and the Prayer Book should be published in the Irish language, and that preachers competent to speak to the people in that tongue should be employed, itinerating from parish to parish for that purpose.[3] The scheme was an excellent one—on paper,—but it needed some enthusiasm and devotion to carry it out, and these things unfortunately were conspicuously lacking at the time. Some Protestants openly opposed the scheme; others gave it a half-hearted acquiescence. Between them, it never came to very much.

[3] Mant

A little later in the century, Henry Maule, then (1733) Bishop of Dromore, and afterwards Bishop of Meath, took up the subject, and advocated the establishment of schools all over the country. In a sermon preached by him in Christ Church Cathedral on the 23rd of October, 1733, he dwells at length on the methods to be adopted for the conversion of the Roman Catholics, and he says that two things were necessary: first, a wise and prudent execution of the laws against Popery; and secondly, effectual and Christian methods for the general instruction of the Irish natives in the principles of the true religion and the English tongue. Under the second head he dwells at length on the importance of educating the people, and says that "the poorer sort of the Irish most chearfully send their children to the English Protestant schools, provided they are taught gratis." The scheme which he advocated was to some extent carried out. A charter was granted, for which reason the institutions became known as "charter schools," and there were great hopes that the system would be crowned with an abundant success. Unfortunately, it was an age in which corruption reigned supreme, and the fraud that was carried on in connection with the charter schools soon destroyed any hopes of their efficacy in accomplishing the purposes for which they were intended. The priests, after a time, forbade their people to send the children, and established opposition schools of their own in every district. In 1788 there were two hundred and thirty-six Roman Catholic schools in the Diocese of Meath—a much larger number than is to be found at the present moment.

The efforts made for the conversion of Roman Catholics, though conducted in this half-hearted and blundering way, were not without result. There is

preserved in the Record Office at Dublin, quite a long roll of certificates granted to converts. Of these, something more than a hundred belong to the Diocese of Meath—not a very great number considering the space of time covered, but probably not representing more than a fractional part of the real total. Those who received these certificates had first signed a form of abjuration, which they afterwards read publicly in church during the time of divine service. They were then received by the clergyman, who used a special form of prayer provided for the occasion, and all this being reported to the bishop, the formal certificate was issued by him. The following form was drawn up by Bishop Maule for use in the Diocese of Meath, and is preserved in a *Book of Precedents* :

Henry, by Divine Providence Lord Bishop of Meath, to all to whom these Presents come, greeting. We do hereby certifie that A.B., of the Parish of C., in the County of D., hath renounced the errors of the Church of Rome, and was received into the Communion of the Church of Ireland, on the fourteenth day of July, in the year of Our Lord One thousand seven hundred forty and five, and that the said A.B. is a Protestant, and doth conform to the Church of Ireland as by law established. In testimony whereof we have caused our episcopal Seal to be affixed to these Presents. Dated the twenty-second day of July, in the year of Our Lord One thousand seven hundred forty and five.

The most famous of the converts, as far as the Diocese of Meath is concerned, was Baron Dunboyne, who in 1786 resigned his position as Roman Catholic Bishop of Cork, declaring at the same time his intention of marrying. Great pressure was brought to bear upon him by the authorities of the Roman Church to prevent what they naturally regarded as a great scandal. The Pope himself wrote a letter to dissuade him;

but all was without avail. He read his recantation in 1787 in the Parish Church of Clonmel. His certificate is amongst those preserved in the Record Office, but it does not mention the fact that he had been Bishop of Cork. In 1800 he once more made his submission to the Church of Rome, and prayed to be restored to its communion.

CHAPTER XXX.

METHODISM.

METHODISM was undoubtedly the most remarkable religious movement of the eighteenth century. Its progress in Meath was not as marked as it was in some other parts of the country, yet it was sufficiently great to merit special notice in a history of the diocese.[1]

It was principally in the western portions of the diocese that the Methodists established their societies. The following places are all mentioned in John Wesley's Journal as localities that had been visited by that great evangelist: Tullamore, Clara, Moate, Athlone, Tyrrelspass, Ballyboy, Frankford, Ferbane, Mullingar, and Drumcree. To some of these places he only paid a passing visit, but in most of them he established societies, many of which continue to the present day. He seems to have had large congregations wherever he went. In Tullamore, he says that "most of the inhabitants of the town" came to the preaching, and even at five o'clock in the morning "abundance of them" came back again to hear him once more. In Clara he preached to "a vast number of well-behaved people." In Moate he had only a handful of listeners, but they were very enthusiastic, and he pays the place the compliment of saying that it was "the pleasantest town that I have seen in Ireland." But it was at

[1] The information in this chapter is mostly derived from John Wesley's *Journal*.

Athlone especially that he had the greatest success. Here he preached from the window of an unfinished house, opposite the market house, for the building which had been placed at his disposal "would not have contained half the congregation." This was on Saturday, the second of April, 1784. The following day he preached again, and so many came, that he says: "The waters spread too wide to be deep." The next Sunday the Roman Catholic priest had to forbid his flock from attending, and "seeing his command did not avail, came in person at six, and drove them away before him like a flock of sheep." After that, he tells us, "the roaring lion began to shake himself," and there was some opposition, but the objectors could not oppose openly, "the stream running so strong against them." And so he continued until, at the end of his visit, he writes, "With much difficulty I broke away from this immeasurably loving people."

Notwithstanding this success, John Wesley does not seem to have had a very high opinion of the spirituality of the Meath people. They came to his meetings and behaved decorously, but they seldom were touched with his enthusiasm, and therefore it seemed to him that they failed to receive as much benefit as might otherwise have come to them. At Clara, he rejoices in the great multitudes that flocked to his service, but adds: "How few of these would have returned empty if they had heard the word of God, not out of curiosity merely but from a real desire to do His will." On another occasion he writes concerning the same place, "I admired the seriousness of the whole congregation;" from which we might imagine that an improvement had taken place in the meantime. But even then he was not quite satisfied,

for he adds: "Indeed one or two gentlemen appeared quite unconcerned, but the presence of greater gentlemen kept them within bounds, so they were as quiet—as if they had been at the play-house."

They were much more responsive to him at Tyrrelspass. Speaking of a meeting held there in 1748, he says: "Many of the neighbouring gentlemen were present, but none mocked. That is not the custom here. All attend to what is spoken in the name of God. They do not understand the making sport with sacred things, so that whether they approve or not they behave with seriousness." A somewhat different picture of the place is presented by Charles Wesley, who, writing about the same time, says: "God has begun a great work here. The people of Tyrrelspass were wicked to a proverb—swearers, drunkards, Sabbath-breakers, thieves, etc., from time immemorial. But now the scene is entirely changed. Not an oath is heard or a drunkard seen among them. *Aperto vivitur horto.* They are turned from darkness to light. Near one hundred are joined in society, and following hard after the pardoning God."

For some reason or other, the Methodists were for a long time kept out of Mullingar. On July 9th, 1750, Wesley notes in his Journal. "In our way we stopped an hour at Mullingar. The sovereign of the town came to the inn, and expressed much desire that I should preach, but I had little hopes of doing good by preaching in a place where I could preach but once, and where none except myself would be suffered to preach at all." After a time, however, the obstacle, whatever it was, was removed, and in 1767 he tells us: "We went on to Molingar, where for many years no Methodist preacher could appear." But even then the Mullingar people seem to have been somewhat

half-hearted, for when, a few years later, he preached there again (in 1771), he tells us that there was "a serious and decent congregation, but they seemed quite unconcerned."

The system of these early Methodists was quite consistent with loyalty to the church. To some extent, no doubt, it ignored the parochial organization. Wesley and his followers did not hesitate to carry on their work without paying any respect to the opinion of the ecclesiastical authorities of the district. He used to say, "The world is my parish," and he acted continually on that principle. But on the other hand, the Methodist service was always held at such an hour as would not interfere with the regular church services. Wesley himself always made it a point to attend divine service in the parish church of the district in which he found himself, and he exhorted his followers to do the same. In consequence of this attitude, the Methodist movement was encouraged by many of the clergy. John Wesley tells us that at one of his meetings at Athlone he had five clergymen present among the auditors. It is said that Henry Goldsmith, brother of the poet, and curate of Kilkenny West, was amongst those who were attracted by the Methodist services at Athlone. The historian of Irish Methodism most gratuitously suggests that his religion had been up to this mere formalism—a suggestion that is certainly not borne out by anything we know of the man. He says: "He was just the amiable person so beautifully described in the *Deserted Village*, but like most of the clergy of that day, was a stranger to experimental religion, regarding its profession as enthusiasm."[2] He seems to have been greatly impressed with the Methodist preaching, and it lends a certain pathos

[2] Crookshank, *History of Methodism*.

to the story, when we learn that he died about six weeks after he had been brought into contact with the movement.

But if some of the clergy encouraged the preachers, there is no doubt, that many others opposed them. Nor need we wonder at this, for if in some places Methodism was found to be a help to the Church, in many other places it was distinctly antagonistic. In Oldcastle, when the Society was first established there, the congregation in church increased so much that the building was unable to accommodate the crowd that assembled Sabbath after Sabbath. In other places it was the same, and if all members of the society had been faithful followers of the founder, there would have been a similar experience in every case. Unfortunately, the tendency which at length led the Methodists to separate from the Church was already making its influence felt, and relations consequently often became somewhat strained. In Athlone, at one time, the Methodists in a body left the church, and it was only by the personal influence of John Wesley himself that they were induced to return. He urged that if only for the sake of the other worshippers, who sadly needed a good example, the Methodists should not absent themselves from the parish church. But he pointed out also that the spiritual loss to themselves was equally great, for the meetings of the society were never intended to be a substitute for the ordinary services of the sanctuary. Writing in 1767, when the Methodists of Athlone had been brought to a better mind, he says: "I was among those that both feared and loved God; but to this day they have not recovered the loss which they sustained when they left off going to church. It is true that they have long been convinced of their mistake, yet the fruit of it still remains; so that there

are very few that retain that vigour of spirit which they before enjoyed."

When such tendencies were beginning to manifest themselves, we can scarcely wonder that the majority of the church clergy viewed the whole movement with suspicion, and that some of them even encountered it with hostility. This hostility came to a head in Meath in the year 1751, when a formal complaint was made to the bishop concerning the action of the vicar of Delvin, Mr. Moore Booker, who had identified himself in a very public way with the Methodist movement. The bishop not only spoke to Mr. Booker privately, but mentioned the matter in his visitation charge, and cautioned the clergy against the delusion that one of their brethren had unhappily fallen under. Some correspondence ensued, which was afterwards issued in pamphlet form by Mr. Booker, and from which a few extracts may be given, as throwing light on the history of this great religious movement. Mr. Booker only gives his own letters, and the documents to which these are replies have not been preserved. We have therefore only the statement of one side of the question. By inference, however, we may learn to some extent what was the position taken by the bishop, and by those of the clergy with whom he agreed.

Mr. Booker, by way of preface to his letters, gives a short address to the reader. In it he complains of the action of the bishop at the visitation, and says that, "my defection has since become a common topic of conversation, both in city and country." He goes on to say concerning the Methodists: "I believe I have heard all that can be said with the least propriety against them, and still think they ought not to be discouraged. . . . I must declare that my church, at least its Communion Table, owes almost nine in ten

of its company to their labours, and I can affirm the same of one or two neighbouring parishes. Were it not for them, we should meet as few of the meaner sort there as of gentlemen of rank and fortune."

Then comes his letter to the bishop. In it he asks for advice in relation to his behaviour to the people called Methodists, who were increasing in and about his parish. He says that he had given them no countenance until he had enquired into their tenets, their lives, and their conversation, and that he had found them very strongly attached to the doctrines of the Established Church; that they professed no singularities, except in a zeal for faith, purity, and devotion, that rises to enthusiasm, and all this accompanied with a scrupulous exactness in their moral conduct. He then speaks of the increase in his congregations, and especially in the number of communicants, and tells how the Methodists were asking for more frequent Communions, which he was giving them, both at his own church and at the church of Drumcree. Incidentally he mentions that the number of communicants on Christmas Day in Delvin Church was above fifty, and that on the day before he wrote his letter to the bishop, he had seventy communicants at Drumcree. Among these seventy, he says, there were six Papists, and he tells us how, "it was not a little affecting to see the poor creatures open their mouths for the bread to be put into them, as they had been used." In conclusion, he expresses the opinion that the clergy should treat the Methodists with all gentleness and indulgence. "If we can but reclaim them," he says, "from their enthusiasm, and prevail on the more rational members of the society—for such they have among them—to lead them into a more intelligible manner of expressing themselves

in their particular assemblies, they may become such ornaments to Christianity as may give us a little sketch of the apostolic age. . . . That they are casting out devils in Christ's name is undeniable, and we have not even the weak pretence of the infant apostles for the forbidding them, since it cannot be said they follow not with us. Besides, if they be irritated, it is to be feared they may entirely desert the Church, and make its deplorable breaches wider."

When the bishop received this letter, he showed it to some of his clergy, and consulted with them as to what course of conduct he should pursue. He then asked Mr. Booker to wait on him, and an interview ensued, in which, says the latter, " his lordship treated me with all civility and paternal affection." The bishop objected to the Methodists that " they had arrogated to preach without any legal designation to that office, being neither bishops, priests, or deacons." To this Booker replied that unordained persons are indeed very wisely excluded from our pulpits, but he knew of no law of God or of Protestants that forbade Christians, even of the laity, to assemble themselves together (at hours not appointed for the service of God or man) to exhort one another, to confess their sins one to another, and pray for one another, to read the Holy Scriptures, and when merry to sing psalms.

The bishop then made a comparison between the Methodists and the Puritans, but Booker again replied, that " did they, like the Puritans of the former age, seduce believers from the Established Church, we should have reason to be alarmed ; but the direct contrary is manifest."

His lordship went on to blame Mr. Booker for attending the Methodist meetings, and taking part in them. His defence on this point was peculiar,

and showed that he had no great confidence in the Wesleyan system after all. "Really, I thought myself," he said, "as much in the way of my duty as some tender mothers whom I have known, when strangers had got in to the nursery, to steal in lest they should have brought their pockets full of trash, and poison the children out of stark love and kindness."

The bishop named some clergymen in the diocese who entertained opinions antagonistic to the Methodists. To this Mr. Booker replied that "he could not be expected to pay implicit deference to their judgment, but must be led by his own conscience." He then added, "The great Gerson's question must be mine, To what end did God give me a conscience of my own, if another man's must be my rule of living and dying?" He afterwards spoke to one or two of the clergymen who had been named by the bishop, and he tells us that "their prejudices ran high, but they knew nothing of the people in question but by hearsay."

The interview ended by the bishop referring Mr. Booker to the vicar general of the diocese, "for further information and advice, in relation to the great offence he had to his brethren, by his letter to his lordship." As a consequence of this reference, Mr. Booker wrote a second letter, a copy of which is also given in his pamphlet, addressed to the Reverend Doctor Adam Lyndon, Vicar General of Meath.

In this he repeats much of what he had already stated, and defends himself against the several charges that had been made aganist him. The objections urged aganist the Methodists seem to have been principally on account of their "enthusiasm," by which word was then meant either fancied inspiration, or an ill-regulated and misdirected excitement of religious emotion. To this charge Booker replies

that "the very low and ignorant are only to be gained by so strong and violent an assault upon their passions that no small degree of enthusiasm is able to carry to effect." He also adds that "these poor people in no way pretend to prophecy, but depend wholly on the ordinary co-operation of the Spirit of God with their own, which they are persuaded Jesus Christ has promised them in His Gospel, on the condition of true faith and sincere repentance. Their terrible agitations arise only from conviction of their sins, and their joyous emotions, which in some time exceeds them, from the apprehension of the Spirit of God bearing witness with their spirits that they are the sons of God. If all this be nonsense, it is not their own. Saint John seems to have addressed his First Epistle chiefly to such little children, that they might (not suppose or hope, but) *know* that they have eternal life."

In the concluding paragraph of the letter, he tells that his son, in Dublin, had heard some very exaggerated accounts of the bishop's action. "There was a report about town that I was to be suspended for a letter I had written to my bishop concerning the swaddlers." He says he is not afraid of that, as indeed he need not have been, for there was neither the power nor the wish to do so. But he goes on to tell of one of his parishioners, Alexander Irwin, who had been assaulted in Athboy, "a town full of Papists." The cry, "a swaddler," was raised by the Popish mob, who attacked the man in great numbers, knocked him down, and beat him in a most cruel manner, some of the bones of his hand being dislocated, if not broken. "This, sir," adds Mr. Booker, "or worse may, nay shall be, my fate, if nothing but joining cry against these poor innocents can prevent it."

It is a curious fact that notwithstanding all this

championing of the Methodists by Mr. Booker, they on their part did not at all approve of him or of his ministrations. The incident is one that is sometimes referred to as illustrating the intolerance of the Church at that time. A recent writer says concerning it, "The Vicar of Delvin might question the natural depravity of man, repudiate the personality of the Devil, and even deny the Divinity of Christ, as publicly and frequently as he pleased, with no one to gainsay or call him to account; but as soon as he showed any sympathy with Methodism, the bishop and his clergy were up in arms against him."[3]

The slanderous assertion here made that Bishop Maule would not have censured Mr. Booker for heresy has absolutely no grounds to go upon. That he did not approve of the methods of the Wesleyans is of course manifest, and that being so, he had a perfect right to reason with one of his clergy as he did. Methodists of the present day have for the most part been brought to see that the bishop was right. They have plenty of "enthusiasm" in its modern sense, and to this they owe their great success in many places. But "enthusiasm" in the same sense in which the word was used in the eighteenth century is no longer favoured by them. Possibly it might have been wiser in the rulers of the Church at that time if they had endeavoured to control and correct the movement, instead of condemning it, but if they saw in it—as they believed they did—elements that were objectionable, it is not fair to charge them with intolerance if they held aloof from that in which they could not join conscientiously.

[3] Crookshank.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Bishops of the Eighteenth Century.

During the eighteenth century there were no fewer than thirteen bishops of Meath. Some of them were quickly promoted; others only lived for a short time after their appointment. Both causes combined to make the changes frequent. But Meath was not altogether singular in this respect, for the way in which prelates were translated from see to see at that time would surprise churchmen of to-day. Of some of these bishops—Tennison, Moreton, Evans, Downes, Lambert, and Ellis—we have already spoken. It remains to add a few details concerning the other bishops up to the end of the century.

On the death of Bishop Ellis in 1734, Arthur Price, Bishop of Ferns and Leighlin, was translated to Meath. It is observed of him that he "gradually passed through all the stations of the Church, having been successively first reader, then curate, of Saint Werburgh's in Dublin; vicar of Celbridge; prebendary of Donadea in Kildare; rector of Louth in Armagh; archdeacon and canon of Kildare; and finally dean of Ferns; whence he was promoted to the bishoprics of Clonfert and Kilmacduagh, in May, 1724."[1] From Clonfert he was translated to Ferns, and from that to Meath. After nine years he was once more translated —this time to the archbishopric of Cashel.

Bishop Evans had bequeathed certain funds for the erection of an episcopal palace at Ardbraccan, and

[1] Harris's *Ware*.

had obtained plans for the building, which doubtless he would himself have erected if his life had been spared. His three immediate successors allowed the project to remain in abeyance, and it was not until the time of Bishop Price that the work was taken in hand. Price began by erecting the offices, which he built in a handsome manner, so that they might serve for wings of the principal building. He had only progressed thus far in the work when he was translated from Meath to Cashel, and his successor allowed things to remain as they were, using part of the new offices as his dwelling-house.

When Price took up his abode at Cashel, he found that his predecessor, Archbishop Bolton, had undertaken the restoration of the old cathedral. It was the most ancient and historically interesting fabric then in use in all Ireland, and he prized it as a relic of the ancient Irish Church. It would not have required any great sum for the preservation of the old building. On the other hand, it was not easily accessible, and for that reason Archbishop Price abandoned the undertaking, and procured an Act of Council authorizing him to remove the cathedral from the Rock of Cashel into the town. The roof of the old church was then torn away, the soldiers quartered in the town being employed for the purpose; and the new cathedral, though begun after some delay, was left unfinished for over twenty years. An annotator, writing in an old copy of Ware, mentions these facts, and adds, "It were much to be wished that he had never quitted Meath, for then the house of Ardbraccan would have been completed; and the noble, the venerable cathedral of Cashel would have escaped his destructive hand." [2]

[2] Mant.

The next in the succession of Bishops of Meath was Doctor Henry Maule, who was translated from the bishopric of Dromore in 1743. He was a native of Arklow, and was educated in Trinity College. In 1720 he was appointed Dean of Cloyne, and in 1726 was promoted to the bishopric of the same diocese. From thence he was translated to Dromore in 1732, and finally to Meath in 1743. Archbishop King says of him that he was distinguished by his care for the souls under his charge, and his charity for the poor, his concern for the faith and discipline of the Church, his good affection for his Majesty, and zeal for his government and the public good.

We have already seen how Bishop Maule advocated the establishment of charter schools, believing that the education of the young was the best means for regenerating the country. He carried out his ideas in his own neighbourhood, and established one of these schools near his own house at Ardbraccan. It continued for many years in a state of efficiency, doing a good work. A writer in the *Hibernian Magazine* for June, 1809, gives the following description of the place:

Being a few minutes walk to the charter school, I visited it. I was never very partial to these institutions, and so much has latterly been said on the subject in public, I confess I entered the house with many prejudices against them. An inspection of its economy, however, convinced me that these prejudices were groundless, and to dissipate them, it is only necessary to visit the seminary of Ardbraccan. There are sixty boys in the establishment, who have been rescued from idleness, poverty and vice, with their consequent evils, and are here trained up under a very active and intelligent master, in a way to render them useful and virtuous members of society. The Incorporated Society have also established an extensive cotton factory, under the inspection of the master, where twelve looms are constantly employed on the premises,

and many other industrious artizans in that neighbourhood. The manufacture of cords and velveteens have been already brought to a high degree of perfection, which, if the finishing were equal, would for fineness and durability of texture, rival English fabric.

The same writer tells how Bishop Maule endeavoured in other ways to promote the prosperity of the place. He says :—

Bishop Maule, who held the See about seventeen years ago, was the founder of its (Ardbraccan's) modern prosperity. He established here a colony of English settlers, at a time when the industry of the natives stood much in need of the example afforded by the strangers, and divided the lands into small farms, which even notwithstanding the shortness of the leases, were rapidly improving. The late bishop, however, in his rage for improvements of another sort, deprived their descendants of their farms, for the purpose of converting them into pasturage and pleasure grounds, and dispersed their unfortunate inmates. The consequence was what might be expected; and Ardbraccan, which even thirty years ago was a flourishing village, is now entirely gone to decay, not having above half a dozen cottages left.

It was in the time of Bishop Maule that Wilson's Hospital, at Multifarnham, was founded. The funds of the institution were derived under the will of Mr. Andrew Wilson, who died in 1724, and left his property for the benefit of his wife and others, and after her death for the benefit of his nephew William Wilson. On his decease, the property was to go to the Lord Primate, the Archbishops of Dublin and Tuam, and the Bishops of Meath and Kilmore, who were within seven years to build a hospital, with school house and chapel, and to open the institution for the reception of old men to a number not exceeding forty, and Protestant male children, not exceeding one hundred and fifty. He made various regulations for the

management of the establishment, and directed that the inmates should be dressed with blue faced with orange. He also provided for a chaplain, who was to be appointed at a salary not exceeding twenty pounds a year, and who was to hold daily service, and on the 8th day of September in each year (being the testator's birth day) "preach a sermon to the aged men and children to be settled in the said Hospital, to keep his charitable intention in their remembrance."

His nephew, William Wilson, after having come into possession of the property, purchased other lands, which he left as an addition to the endowment, and on his death, in 1743, the whole passed into the hands of the trustees named in the will of Andrew Wilson, and is still administered by their respective successors. There was a law suit set on foot by the heirs at law, who endeavoured to upset the will, but it was compromised by a payment made to them of £3,412 10s., and this compromise was afterwards ratified by an Act of Parliament, by which the trustees were constituted a corporate body. The institution still continues its career of usefulness, and is at present in a flourishing condition under its efficient warden, the Reverend Hill Wilson White, D.D., LL.D.

Bishop Maule appears to have been very diligent in his visitation of the clergy of the diocese. From his time we have a succession of Visitation Books, which, though they give very little information, yet show that the visitations were regularly held. A Diocesan Synod also was held yearly on the Thursday after Whitsunday—the Visitation being generally held on Wednesday in the same week. The synod was presided over by the archdeacon, and in Meath it took the place which in other dioceses was taken by the Dean and Chapter. The business transacted at these

synods was not very important, and in many years there is no report at all. The following Minutes for the year 1747 will show the class of subjects that engaged their attention.

First, there is a list of parishes, with the names of the rector, curate, parish clerk, churchwardens, and schoolmaster, in each case. Then it goes on :

Acts had and sped in the annual synod of the clergy of the Diocese of Meath, held in the Parish Church of Tryme, in the said Diocese of Meath, on Thursday next following the Feast of Pentecost, to wit, the eleventh day of June, in the year of our Lord One thousand seven hundred and forty and seven, before the said Right Reverend ffather in God Henry by Divine Permission Lord Bishop of Meath, and in presence of me, John Harris, Register of the said diocese.

(Here follow sixty-six names of clergy attending.)

On which day, and so-forth, it was unanimously agreed upon that for the time to come at every visitation to be holden for the said Diocese of Meath, each beneficed clergyman of the said diocese, whether absent or present, do pay for his dinner an English crown, and that each curate of the said Diocese of Meath, if present at dinner, do pay for his dinner one half an English crown. And it was likewise agreed that a proxy tendered by any person to excuse the personal appearance of any beneficed clergyman at any future visitation, shall not be received unless such proctor shall pay and discharge all demands such beneficed clergyman shall be subject to at such visitation.

Signed by order,

JOHN HARRIS, *Register*.[3]

From the report of other synods, we learn that the clergy used to elect proctors to serve in Parliament, and " in their behalf to consent to such things as shall be then and there enacted." The clergy also " ratified and confirmed under the common seal " the commission of the vicar general of the diocese ; and they made arrangements for the support of the widows of the clergy.

[3] Record Office, Dublin.

In 1751 the number of widows on the list was five, and amongst them was the widow of Charles Goldsmith, and mother of Oliver, who received an annuity of ten pounds a year. In connection with this fact it is interesting to notice that the Vicar of Wakefield is represented as making a charity such as this his special care. "The profits of my living, which amounted to about thirty-five pounds a year, I made over to the orphans and widows of the clergy of our diocese." In 1758 it would seem that the fund was not progressing satisfactorily, and in the synod of that year it was "agreed that the Rev. Dr. Atkinson, the Rev. Mr. Cope, the Rev. Mr. Coghlan, the Rev. Mr. Thompson, the Rev. Mr. Lightburn, the Rev. Mr. Barker, the Rev. Mr. Daine, and such other of the clergy as will attend, shall be a committee to draw up and consider of a scheme for the better provision of the widows of the clergy of the diocese, and that they meet as shall be most convenient to them for that purpose. And it was further ordered and agreed that all widows hereafter who intend to apply for the benefit arising by this fund shall send a memorial in writing, which is to be lodged with the register of the diocese previous to the visitation, setting forth their pretensions to it, certified by the minister of the parish where they reside; and that such widows who at present receive relief from the same are to send an affidavit to every visitation of their having no other relief or charity elsewhere, and of their not being married at the respective times of their making such affidavits." The efforts of the committee were not very effectual, for in the next year they were only able to pay eight pounds to each widow, "on account of the deficiency of the fund." This fund continued to be in existence up to the time of disestablishment.

Besides the ordinary visitations, Bishop Maule used to visit specially parishes in which the circumstances of the case seemed to require it. We have an example of such a visitation being held at Laracor, on the seventh of August, 1750. The Record [4] tells us that "Peter Hannon, clerk, Vicar of Lercor, otherwise Laracor, in the said Diocese of Meath, being three times publicly called, appeared personally in court, and was admonished by the court to reside in his said vicarage, and to perform the cure thereof by the twenty-ninth day of September next ensuing, under pain of contempt."

Among the many good deeds of Bishop Maule, it deserves to be mentioned that he restored the tomb of Bishop Montgomery in the churchyard of Ardbraccan. A Latin inscription records how it had fallen down and become ruinous, either from the effects of time, or more probably from the evil deed of sacrilegious hands, and that it was restored, lest the memory of the righteous should be blotted out. In the same tomb were buried Montgomery's wife and daughter, and three quaint figures may still be seen with the initials, G.M., S.M., and I.M. Maule himself was buried in the same tomb, and at a later period Bishops Pococke and O'Beirne were also laid to rest there beside their predecessors.

It may be noted, too, that Maule took some interest in history, and had at one time the intention of writing a History of the Church of Ireland.[5] He wrote to Archbishop King on the subject, and that prelate replied in a letter which discusses the subject, admitting that such a work was very much needed, but stating that the difficulties in the way were so great that he had no hopes of ever seeing it accomplished. He says that

[4] Record Office, Dublin. [5] Mant.

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the clergy "are put to such shifts to live, so employed in the common offices of their duties, that they have not time to apply themselves to anything else;" and, as to the laymen, "our gentlemen do not apply themselves to learning, and those who are able to employ hands to collect and procure the sight of records generally live out of the kingdom."

The Record Office of that day, too, was not as efficiently managed or as accessible to students as it is at present. "The offices where our records lie are kept or held by persons that neither live in the kingdom, nor if they did, were capable of looking into the records. The poor harpy deputy has no view but to get money; never minds anything but what gets him the penny; hardly knows what records he has in his custody; and can neither find them if you inquire for them, nor let you peruse them without considerable sums and great costs." With difficulties such as these, it does not surprise us to learn that the project went no further.

From the particulars which have been given it will be seen that Bishop Maule was one of our most efficient bishops. He held the See of Meath until his death, which occurred in 1758, and was succeeded by the Honourable William Carmichael, second son of the Earl of Hyndford. Carmichael had been Archdeacon of Bucks, and came to Ireland as Bishop of Clonfert in 1753. In 1758 he was translated to Leighlin, and in the same year translated again to Meath. He continued in Meath until 1765, when he became Archbishop of Dublin. There is nothing particular to record of his episcopate.

He was succeeded by Richard Pococke, well known as a traveller, whose works are not without their value, even at the present day. He was the son of an English

clergyman, and nephew of Thomas Milles, Bishop of Waterford. His first episcopal appointment was to the See of Ossory, which he obtained in 1756. From thence he was translated to Meath in 1765; but he survived this event only for a few months, for he was seized with apoplexy while in the act of holding his first visitation, and died shortly afterwards.

He was not only a traveller but an antiquary, and was of great assistance to Mervyn Archdall in the preparation of his *Monasticon*, supplying him with some of his materials, and making suggestions as to the form the work should take. Archdall had been domestic chaplain to the Bishop while in the See of Ossory, and it is a curious coincidence that while the present Bishop of Down, Doctor Crozier, was Bishop of Ossory, he had for domestic chaplain a member of the same family, and a namesake of the famous author, the Reverend Mervyn Archdall Clare. In 1786 Mervyn Archdall entered the Diocese of Meath as Incumbent of Slane, and in that parish spent many years, until his death. His tombstone at Slane is still preserved.

The following curious description of Bishop Pococke is given by a Mr. Cunningham, and is quoted in Mant's *History of the Church of Ireland*. It not only tells us something about the bishop, but also of the methods of travelling, and of the state affected by bishops, in those days.

That celebrated oriental traveller and author (he says), was a man of mild manners and primitive simplicity. Having given the world a full detail of his researches in Egypt, he seemed to hold himself excused from saying any more about them, and observed in general an obdurate taciturnity. In his carriage and deportment he seemed to have contracted something of the Arab character; yet there was no austerity in his silence, and though his air was solemn, his temper was serene. When we were on our road to Ireland, I saw from

the windows of the inn at Daventry a cavalcade of horsemen approaching on a gentle trot, headed by an elderly chief in clerical attire, who was followed by five servants, at distances geometrically measured and most precisely maintained, and who upon entering the inn proved to be this distinguished prelate, conducting his horde with the phlegmatick patience of a schiek.

There are still to be seen at Ardbraccan several magnificent cedar trees, which are said to be the produce of seeds brought from Lebanon by Bishop Pococke. He died at Ardbraccan, and was buried, as we have seen, in the tomb of Bishop Montgomery. On the south side of the monument which commemorates this latter prelate there is an inscription which tells us: "Here lies interred the body of Richard Pocock, Bishop of Meath, who died September 15th, 1765, in the 63rd year of his age."

The next bishop was Arthur Smyth, who had been Dean of Derry, then successively Bishop of Clonfert, Bishop of Down, and in 1765 Bishop of Meath. He only continued in the diocese from October, 1765 to April, 1766, and he was then translated to the Archbishopric of Dublin. The following description of him is given by his successor in the See of Dublin, Archbishop Cradock :—

> He was endowed with talents and qualified by experience for a due execution of the great trust committed to him, and both had received improvements from (what is unquestionably a great acquisition, but at the same time a rare felicity to those of our order) travel and observation. He had penetration to discern at the most critical conjunctures and firmness to accomplish upon the most trying occasions, what appeared to him for the real benefit of the community, either in Church or State. In a word, his attention to his duty kept pace with his knowledge of it.[6]

Bishop Smyth was succeeded by the Honourable Henry Maxwell, youngest son of Lord Farnham. He

[6] Dalton's *History of the Archbishops of Dublin*, p. 344.

was translated from Dromore in 1766, and continued to be Bishop of Meath until his death, which occurred in 1798. Of this long episcopate we have comparatively little record. The visitations were held regularly every year, but the returns contain merely a list of the clergy, without any particulars. An exception can perhaps be made for the return of 1768, which gives us a little more information. From it we learn that non-residence, which has so often been noticed as one of the evils of the Church, had again become exceedingly prevalent, and that no less than forty-nine parishes in the diocese were without a resident clergyman. There were seventy-one churches in repair. Among the clergy appears the name of Henry Goldsmith as Curate of Kilkenny West. He was the brother of the poet. It was by Bishop Maxwell that the house at Ardbraccan was completed. Doctor Beaufort, in his *Memoir of a Map of Ireland*, says of it that it is "near the town of Navan, erected by the present bishop, in a style of superior elegance, and yet with such simplicity as does equal honour to his lordship's taste and liberality."

The arrangements for the housing of the clergy were not as satisfactory as that of the bishop, for according to this same work of Doctor Beaufort, there were only twenty-nine glebe houses in the whole diocese. Beaufort's own parish, Navan, was one of those without a residence for the clergyman, and he has to be counted also among the pluralists and non-residents, as he was Incumbent of Collon, in the Diocese of Armagh, where he usually had his abode.

A new order of things was established when Thomas Lewis O'Beirne was appointed to the diocese in 1798. But there is so much to tell about that period, that the consideration of it must be reserved for another chapter.

CHAPTER XXXII.

The Rebellion of 1798.

The year which saw Bishop O'Beirne entering upon his duties as Bishop of Meath witnessed one of the most calamitous events of Irish history, the rebellion of 1798. A few words must be said on this subject before we enter on an account of the episcopate of that remarkable prelate. The rebellion did not extend over so great a part of the country as did the insurrection of 1641, nor was the movement in any sense as formidable. It was, however, sufficiently extended to cause suffering and unrest even in parts of the country where there was little or no fighting, and it brought untold hardships for the time being alike on the loyalists and on the rebels.

The leaders of the United Irishmen were for the most part men who had embraced the doctrines of the French Revolution—a fact which may explain why the rebellion broke out at that particular time. At first sight it seems strange that the moment chosen for insurrection was one when the country was making fairly rapid advance in prosperity, when penal laws were being repealed, when concessions were being made, such as the establishment of a Roman Catholic college at Maynooth, and when Ireland enjoyed a Parliament of her own, with an amount of independence which had hitherto been unknown. But the spirit of revolution was in the air; the overthrow of the French monarchy was a tremendous object lesson before the

orld ; and as there was always in Ireland a smouldering iscontent, it needed but this to fan it to a flame.

This fact gave to the rebellion of 1798 an aspect ifferent from that of other insurrections. It took om it the religious character, and caused the Roman atholic bishops and clergy to look upon the movement ith a considerable amount of suspicion. In 1641 special envoy from Rome came to direct the insurgents ı their enterprise. In 1798, on the contrary, the ıovement was to some extent denounced by the rulers f the Roman Catholic Church. A few of the ordinary riests, no doubt, were carried away with the tide f popular opinion, some others were deterred by fear om expressing themselves publicly in condemnation f the insurrection, but several of the bishops delivered ıemselves very clearly on the subject. Doctor lunkett, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Meath, peaking at Drogheda on the twenty-seventh of May, ıld the people that the rebellion was a criminal surrection, "connected with principles hostile to ligion, and to our reputation for loyalty, in the cause which Irish Catholics had so often suffered before." he day following, at Duleek, he assigned as the causes the rebellion, "the credulity of the lower classes, ıe decay of Christian piety, and the prevalence of the ıpious principles that are disturbing a great part of ıe Continent." At Ratoath, a few days later, he reprobated in the most pointed terms the rebellion, contrary to the doctrine and practice of Jesus Christ, Saint Paul, of the primitive Christians, to the admired ınduct of the Irish Catholics of the last century, as pported on French principles, hostile to the Catholic ligion." [1]

These warnings came too late as far as Meath was

[1] Cogan, *Diocese of Meath.*

concerned. Already the insurgents were assembled, and had tasted alike of battle and of defeat. They chose the Hill of Tara for their meeting place, doubtless on account of its historic associations. In point of military strength, too, they could scarcely have found a more favourable rendezvous. But they were nothing more than a badly armed mob, and they were simply powerless against the disciplined troops with which they had to contend. They did not even try to retain the advantage of position which the site afforded, but assuming the offensive, left the height, and exposed themselves to the fire of artillery and the charges of cavalry. The result of course was a complete rout, and those who escaped from the field of slaughter were broken up into small parties, who fled through the country, and were glad if they could reach the shelter of their homes in safety, thenceforth effectually cured of a desire for campaigning. At a later period there was a second attempt to rouse the populace in Meath, but the punishment of defeat had proved a more effectual lesson than the exhortations of the bishop, and the movement then met with no success.

The ordinary rebel, who shouldered his pike and followed the standard of insurrection, had, it need hardly be said, only the vaguest idea as to what were the principles of the Revolution. His one motive was hatred to England, with, it is to be feared, a large amount also of hatred to Protestants and Protestantism, which, to him meant almost the same thing. Hence we find that the houses of Protestants, especially of clergymen, were special objects of attack, and that along their line of march all the churches were wrecked, and the Bibles and service books destroyed. For miles around the district of Tara, not a church or glebe-house escaped. In Tara itself, the curate was murdered,

ıd the interior of the church destroyed. In the ɛighbouring parish of Knockmark, the rebels broke ıto the clergyman's house, and burned the parish ɛgisters, together with the Bible and Prayer Book, ıd caused the parish clerk to fly for his life. In ʻunboyne the parson's house was ruined, "by the ɛngeance of the rebels on it," and the parish clerk as "cruelly murdered." The glebe-house of Agher as attacked on two separate occasions. In Galtrim, ıe parish clerk had to leave, for, "being a loyal rotestant, his life was in danger." In Kilmore and ɨilbrew, the curates had to fly in order to save their ves. In Athboy and several other places, both parson ıd people found it necessary to leave their homes, ıd seek safety until the coming of better times.[2]

In Westmeath, things were very much the same. hreatening letters were sent; clergy were attacked; rotestant families had to seek safety in flight. The haplain of Wilson's Hospital, Mr. Radcliff, was ctually wounded, and was only saved from the fury f the rebels by the intercession of the parish priest.

Several skirmishes took place in different parts of he diocese. In addition to the battle of Tara, there ʻere engagements at Wilkinstown, Moynalty, Kileggan, Bunbrusna, and Wilson's Hospital. When he rebels had been defeated in Wexford, some of hem, under the leadership of a Roman Catholic priest amed Kearns, made their way into Meath. They ʻere dispersed by the troops which encountered them t Clonard, and they then spread themselves over the ountry, when they were hunted down by twos and hrees. Their reverend leader was taken among the ɛst, and was executed by martial law at Edenderry.

After the rebellion was actually crushed, there

[2] *Answers to Bishop O'Beirne's Queries.* MS. in Library, T.C.D.

continued for some time a kind of petty warfare, caused by small bands of the dispersed rebels, who roamed through the country, and though less formidable to the State it was a source of great danger and annoyance to the loyal inhabitants. This was more especially the case in the western portion of the diocese. As a consequence, martial law continued to be administered, though it became every day increasingly difficult to decide whether the offenders should be treated as rebels or as ordinary criminals.

As happened at other times, our people suffered from their friends as well as from their foes. The soldiers who were quartered in different places were with difficulty kept within bounds. At Dunboyne they burnt most of the houses, and a sum of money had afterwards to be granted to compensate for the damage that they had done. The same thing happened in several other places. Wilson's Hospital was turned into a military barrack, the inmates had to be removed to make room for the soldiers, and a house was taken at Mullingar for their accommodation. In what state the military left it after their occupation, may be judged from the fact, that the glazier's bill alone, amounted to thirty-eight pounds. At one time six of the Hospital soldiers were in jail for robbery, and a guard had to be placed over the Hospital potatoes.[3]

Besides trouble of this kind, the year of the rebellion was a time of great financial difficulty for the clergy of the diocese. They derived their salaries for the most part from tithes—a source of income always difficult to obtain. During the disturbance it was found impossible to collect any tithe, and as a consequence practically all the clergy of Meath were left for that year without any income.

[3] Record Office, Dublin.

Altogether it was a time of great trial to the Protestant community. In several parishes it caused the celebration of public worship to be suspended. All through the diocese, it caused privation and suffering. Happily, the movement attained no very serious proportions in Meath, and the disturbances were of short duration. The first risings in Meath took place about the middle of the month of May. Before the autumn of the same year the district was restored to its normal condition.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Bishop Thomas Lewis O'Beirne.

In the year of the rebellion, 1798, the Diocese of Meath received as its bishop a man of remarkable ability, who inaugurated a new regime, and who in his episcopate of twenty-two years brought the diocese from a position of what seemed almost hopeless disorder to a state of efficiency which it had not known since long before the time of the Reformation. He was a man of no ordinary powers, and the story of his life is one of varied incident. That story has been embellished, too, in a remarkable way by the fancy of romancers, who have drawn on their imagination to such an extent, that two biographies might easily be written—one derived from authentic documents, giving the genuine facts; and the other altogether mythical and quite irreconcilable with the former, but drawn from published accounts, some of them contemporary or nearly contemporary with the subject of the biography.

Thomas Lewis O'Beirne was born in the County Longford, sometime about the end of the year 1747. His parents are said to have been of the farming class, and in humble circumstances. They were, however, sufficiently well off to be able to dedicate two of their sons to the Roman Catholic priesthood, so that we may fairly conclude that the expression "humble circumstances" must be taken in a comparative sense. In those days, Roman Catholic priests were compelled to seek their education abroad, and thereby to incur

ı expense much greater than would be necessary at ıe present day.[1] There were, no doubt, methods by hich young men of small means were enabled to earn ıfficient during their college career to pay for their ɛpenses, but none of these methods seem to have been lopted by the brothers O'Beirne, and we may there- ıre conclude that their parents were sufficiently rich ı be able to pay for the education of their two sons : the College of Saint Omer, in France.

While he was at this seminary, the health of Thomas 'Beirne gave way, and he was ordered for a time to ıe South of France. On his return he again fell ill, ıd this time was sent back to his native country, ı hopes that rest and fresh air would restore him to ɛalth again. It has been represented by some Roman atholic writers that he was on this occasion virtually ɛpelled. Cogan, in his *Diocese of Meath*, says,

> O'Beirne, during his stay in the South of France, formed ɛry suspicious friendships, associated with very irregular ɔung men, most of whom were medical students, took to ading bad books, then swarming and perverting the heart of ɛance, and returned to college at the expiration of his leave absence no longer the same—in fact, an altered and ssipated boy. Being attacked a second time with the same ɔmplaint, he was again ordered out by the doctor; but the ɛsident of the college (Doctor Kelly) consented only on ɔndition that he would go home to Ireland, and on his return ing a letter from his parish priest, certifying that his conduct as correct, and that he frequented the sacraments regularly.

he only vestige of truth in this statement is the fact, ıat if O'Beirne had returned, he would have been ɛpected to have brought with him a letter from his

[1] Killeen (*Ecclesiastical History of Ireland*, vol. ii., p. 350) assumes wrongly ıt O'Beirne was ordained before leaving Ireland, and suggests that he ɔported himself while at St. Omer's College "by chaplaincies or foundations Masses," which he discharged; adding, "Roman Catholic writers, who w deny that O'Beirne was ordained a priest in this Church, have forgotten s usage of the period."

parish priest. This was the usual custom, and there was no reason for departing from it in O'Beirne's case. How far the charge of dissipation and the rest is from the real facts of the case may be judged by a perusal of the following extract from a letter, written by Doctor Plunket, afterwards Roman Catholic Bishop of Meath, and at this time one of the chief professors in the college. The letter, which was a long one, dealing with a variety of subjects, and by no means a mere letter of introduction, was entrusted to O'Beirne, on his leaving Saint Omer's for the last time. In it Doctor Plunket says :—

> The bearer, Mr. O'Beirne, is a young gentleman of this house who returns to Ireland to recover his health by breathing the native air for some time. His promising parts and amiable qualities have made him dear to all the members of the society in which he lived, and particularly to me. I love and esteem him exceedingly. Every civility shown him I shall acknowledge as conferred upon myself. As I am sure he would be glad to be acquainted with Mr. Austin [a priest who at that time kept a school in Dublin], I hope you will procure him that happiness by introducing him. [2]

Abandoning the slander of a partisan writer, and taking as our authority the contemporary document, we are justified in saying that he left Saint Omer's, having gained the affection of his companions and the approbation of his superiors. He, however, never returned. We have no further information, beyond the fact, that somewhat about this time he abandoned the Church of Rome, and joined the Church of England. He did not, however, relinquish the idea of taking Holy Orders, and he, therefore, continued his studies, only it was not at Saint Omer's, but at Trinity College, Cambridge. Here he had for his tutor the Reverend Doctor Watson, who afterwards became Bishop of

[2] Cogan, *Diocese of Meath.*

Llandaff, and on the conclusion of his course he was appointed to the college living of Grendon, in the Diocese of Peterborough. He was accordingly ordained Deacon by John, Lord Bishop of Peterborough, in Trinity College, Cambridge, on Trinity Sunday, 1772, and was made priest in the same college chapel on the sixth of June in the following year.[3] His name appears in the Marriage Register of Grendon Parish as the officiating minister for the first time on November 29th, 1772.[4] Comparing these dates with that of Doctor Plunket's valedictory letter given above (June 6th, 1768), we see that there elapsed just four years from the time of his leaving finally the Roman Catholic seminary and his ordination as a clergyman of the Church of England.

He retained the vicarage of Grendon until 1776, when he was appointed one of the chaplains of the Fleet, and in that capacity sailed with Lord Howe to America.[5] After his return, when the conduct of Lord Howe was called in question, O'Beirne wrote a vindication of his commander's action in a pamphlet, entitled, *A Candid and Impartial Narrative of the Transactions of the Fleet under Lord Howe. By an Officer then serving in the Fleet.* While at New York he preached a remarkable sermon in Saint Paul's Chapel, Trinity Parish, on the Sunday next following the great fire, in which the parish church was destroyed. This sermon attracted considerable attention at the time, and served to bring the young ecclesiastic into notice.

The "romancers" present this story somewhat differently. They place the appointment to Grendon at a much later period of his life, and they say that

[3] Registry of the Diocese of Peterborough.
[4] Information kindly furnished by the Vicar of Grendon.
[5] *Dictionary of National Biography.*

he went to America as Lord Portland's secretary, when that nobleman was appointed Governor General of Canada; that on the voyage the chaplain of the vessel died, and that O'Beirne was allowed to take his place without question, or the production of any credentials, it being assumed that he had received Orders in the Church of Rome before he left that community; and that thus "O'Beirne imposed on the duke, having represented himself as a priest returning to take charge of a parish in his native diocese; and that in consequence he received no Orders in the Protestant Church." This action of his on board the fleet is said to have been his "first formal act of apostacy." [6] All this is simply a tissue of falsehoods, invented by those whose aim was to cast discredit on one who had left their communion. The Duke of Portland was never Governor of Canada, and O'Beirne never sailed with him as secretary. Before he crossed the Atlantic he had been already ordained in the English Church, and had held an ecclesiastical appointment given him by the college in which he had pursued his studies. In every one of its particulars, therefore, the story is not only false, but badly invented and impossible.

In O'Beirne's lifetime these stories had already been set on foot. Many in his own church believed that he had Roman Orders, and on the other hand, many Roman Catholics denied that he was ever ordained, and spoke of him as "the mitred layman." The matter was referred to in Parliament in 1825, that is to say, about two years after the bishop's death. On the sixth of May in that year, the "Roman Catholic Relief Bill" was under consideration, and an amendment was proposed by Mr. Brougham, regulating the appoint-

[6] Cogan, *Diocese of Meath*, vol. ii., p. 186.

ment of men who were in Roman Catholic Orders to positions in the English Church. In his speech on that occasion he gave as one of his arguments, that a man, ordained as a Roman Catholic priest, might obtain preferment, and even become a bishop, without any Anglican ordination, which he seemed to think was necessary; and to show that this was not an imaginary case, he cited the instance, that "Doctor O'Beirne, the late Protestant Bishop of Meath, was originally ordained a priest by the Pope of Rome. He was then a Catholic, but afterwards, becoming a Protestant, he was made bishop without any further ordination." [7]

A few days later (May 10th), Mr. Secretary Peel referred to this assertion made by Mr. Brougham, and stated that he had a letter from Bishop O'Beirne's widow, and that "that lady desired him to state distinctly in answer to the observations in question, that the bishop, her late husband, never was an ordained priest of the Church of Rome. He had been brought up as a Roman Catholic, and so continued until he was about twenty years of age, when, seeing reason to enter the Protestant church, he went to Cambridge. At that university, Doctor Watson was his tutor, and he was ordained for the first time as a deacon of the Protestant Established Church, and some little time subsequently a minister of the Church of England." Mr. Brougham thereupon replied that, "it had been understood that the bishop had in the early part of his life received Orders from the Pope, which had been afterwards repealed. . . . If Bishop O'Beirne had not received Popish ordination, it was singular that this should be so generally credited. He (Mr. B.) in saying

[7] Hansard. Killeen quotes this entry in Hansard, but makes no mention of the contradiction, which Hansard also publishes. He gives his reference to Hansard, but evidently took the quotation second-hand from *The Sham Squire*, in which the same omission occurs.

so, only said what was generally understood. His friends denied it, and he was himself satisfied. It was probable the mistake might have arisen from the brother of Bishop O'Beirne having been a Catholic priest." [8] This somewhat halting and ungracious acceptance of the word of Mrs. O'Beirne shows what wide currency the story had obtained; but it will be noted that her account exactly agrees with that given above, which was derived independently from authentic documentary evidence.

In 1776, the year in which he sailed to America, he published a poem on "The Crucifixion," which seems to have been admired. It does not appear that a copy is preserved either in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, or in the National Library. On his return from the west he was instituted (5th November, 1779) to the crown living of West Deeping, in the Diocese of Lincoln. There is some doubt as to whether he actually took up residence there. The present rector of that parish informs me that the Reverend White Bates was curate from 1745 to 1815, thus covering the time of O'Beirne's incumbency; and that during all that time "no rector ever took a marriage or baptism or burial—at least there is no signature of any in the registers."

O'Beirne at this time took to literature, and gained some applause as a political writer. A series of articles which he contributed to a newspaper, under *nom-de-plume* of "A Country Gentleman," attacking the administration of Lord North, is said to have had considerable influence in bringing about the downfall of the ministry headed by that nobleman. He moved now in literary circles, and "bore an active and respectable part in the polite literature of his day.

[8] Hansard.

Amongst the scholars of his day there was a constant fire of *jeu d'esprits*, ballads, epigrams, imitations of Horace, and copies of verse, kept up by Bushe, Ogle, Langrishe, Ned Lysaght, and the wits of their day. Among these O'Beirne was not the least. He was a fine Latinist, and a copy of verses in that language, written by him, is among the best on the death of Burke we can recollect. It was no less beautiful in an English dress from the hand of Bush." [9]

Among other productions from his pen at this time, was a comedy entitled, "The Generous Impostor," adapted from Destouches' play, "The Dissapateur." The Duchess of Devonshire collaborated with him in the composition, and it was produced at Drury Lane Theatre in 1780, and was printed in the following year.

In 1782 Lord Portland was appointed to the Vice-royalty of Ireland, and O'Beirne returned to his native country as his secretary and chaplain. He had not been many weeks in Ireland before he had an interview with his former teacher, Doctor Plunket, who had in the meantime become Roman Catholic Bishop of Meath. It would be interesting to know what was the subject that they discussed. Possibly it had some connection with the "Roman Catholic Bill," just passed into law, which repealed some of the more irritating portions of the penal code. Possibly the interview was of a more private character, and concerned matters of conscience and faith. Unfortunately the only information that we have consists of two entries in Bishop Plunket's Diary. Under the date June 8th, 1782, we have, "I had an interview this day with Rev. Mr. O'Beirne, secretary to his Grace the Duke of Portland." This is followed by another entry, under

[9] Will's *Lives of Illustrious Irishmen.*

the date June 18th, "I wrote this day to Rev. Mr. O'Beirne, at Dublin Castle."

In after years, when O'Beirne had become Bishop of Meath, and had taken up his residence at Ardbraccan, the two prelates became neighbours, and it is said that they occasionally met, and that they lived on more or less friendly terms with one another. This is the tradition of the country. It is partly corroborated, and perhaps partly contradicted, by the following letters, which are the only documentary evidence that we possess. The first is from Bishop O'Beirne to Bishop Plunket:

Ardbraccan House,
January 11th, 1806.

MY DEAR SIR,

In the 32nd page of this Sermon there is an expression or two that you may interpret into something unpleasant to your feelings, but I hope that with some things in which we both may differ from each other, we shall ever indulge mutual charity; and I request you to accept this copy of my Sermon on the Thanksgiving Day as a testimony of that affectionate attachment which, as it began in early life, no circumstance is ever likely to affect or weaken, notwithstanding the different situations into which we have been thrown. In one thing I am persuaded we shall never differ, the earnest desire of inculcating the superintending providence of God, of promoting Christian morals, and encouraging a disposition of peace and submission to the laws in this distracted country.

I am, my dear Sir,
With every sincere attachment and respect,
Your very faithful humble Servant,
T. L. MEATH. [10]

The sermon to which reference is made was preached in Kells Church on the Thanksgiving Day for the battle

[10] Cogan.

of Trafalgar. A hundred years later, when the centenary of that Thanksgiving Day was celebrated, the sermon was again repeated in Kells Church, before the bishop of the diocese and a large and deeply interested congregation. The passage to which reference is made in the bishop's letter is as follows :

The contrary experiment has been made for us. A nation has tried what it is to be without religion, without morals, without a God in this world. The result has been that the most signalized of these desperate experimentalists, [11] the favourite champion of infidelity and all its train of abominations, was the first to overturn its polluted altars, to abolish its impure rites. He has since changed his ground, but he has preserved a consistency of character. From the extreme of irreligion, he has passed to the extreme of superstition (extremes that invariably meet), and he exhibits to the world a mockery of religion ; a display of theatrical rites, blasphemously engrafted on the awful ceremonies of our religion ; a spurious mixture of discordant morals, neither heathen nor Christian, which every sect and denomination who profess the Gospel agree to reprobate. If we have been preserved from this innovating spirit, if we have checked the inroads of infidelity, and the religion established among us be yet untainted by the superstition that surrounds us, let us show our gratitude in the only way that promises to secure these inestimable blessings to us and to our children. The religion we profess is pure in faith, it must be equally pure in practice. [12]

Bishop Plunket replied to O'Beirne's letter as follows :

Navan,
3rd of March, 1806.

MY LORD,

Unavoidable avocations and excursions have, until this morning, prevented me from acknowledging the receipt of your friendly letter, and a copy of your Thanksgiving Sermon, handed to me by the Rev. Mr. Butler. This, coming from your Lordship, as a "testimony of affectionate attachment," I accept

[11] Napoleon Buonaparte. [12] *Sermons by Bishop O'Beirne.*

with thanks. I have perused it. When I say that I admire many fine passages, the offspring of a lively bright imagination and of a cultivated mind, deeply impressed with a sense of the awful dispensations of the providence of God, your Lordship, I am sure, does not expect I should admire the whole 32nd page. It is not that any expressions it contains affect me personally. No. To be candid, my Lord, I assure you, I cannot without smiling read assertions that impute "superstition" to the religion of Bourdaloue, Flechier, Massillon, Bossuet, Fenelon. But the numerous body of people with whom I have the honour to be peculiarly connected read with other dispositions. They consider such expressions as unprovoked abuse. In vain would I attempt to reconcile them to it by alleging custom, almost constant custom; much less could I pretend to convince them that unprovoked abuse is calculated to heal the bleeding wounds of our distracted country, to promote concord, to answer any one Christian or social purpose. The man who stands in my place is not free to disregard the feelings of his flock. Hence I am placed with respect to your Lordship in a singular predicament—a predicament which casts a gloom upon and thwarts the intercourse I should wish to maintain. My own occasional feelings I can command, or even sacrifice, if necessary, to ancient friendship, and to the remembrance of former times. We differ in some things from each other; but this difference, how great soever, shall not extinguish a single spark of charity in my breast—prevent on my part the discharge of the slightest obligation which this first of all the virtues prescribes. The great duties to which your Lordship alludes, and in which we perfectly agree, have employed no small portion of my time these six and twenty years past. The decline of life and the near approach of eternity will not lessen their importance in my mind, nor, I hope, diminish the attention they claim.

With sentiments of respectful and affectionate attachment,

I am, my Lord,

Your Lordship's obedient and humble Servant,

✠ P. J. PLUNKETT.[13]

As far as authentic evidence goes, O'Beirne's first connection with the Duke of Portland was when he accompanied him to Ireland as chaplain in 1782.

[13] Cogan.

There is, however, a story, which has found its way into some historical works, which tells of a previous introduction to the duke, in an accidental way, at a country inn. It is said that O'Beirne was returning to Saint Omer's College, and that on his way he arrived at a village in England where the whole stock of provisions that the hotel possessed was a small shoulder of mutton. He ordered this to be cooked for his dinner, but while it was in process of preparation, two other travellers arrived, and as they also wanted something to eat, it was after some discussion agreed that they should be O'Beirne's guests, and that all together should partake of the mutton. The travellers turned out to be Charles Fox and the Duke of Portland, and they were so charmed with the young man's conversation that the duke invited O'Beirne to visit him in London, which he did, and thus laid the foundation for all his future fortune.[14]

No two writers agree altogether in the details of this story. The scene is laid by some in Wales, and according to them O'Beirne was not on his way to France, but was going to London in search of literary employment. The incident of the shoulder of mutton, too, is sometimes suppressed, and instead of it, we are told that Portland and Fox were conversing in French, and that O'Beirne told them that if they had any secrets to speak about, it was well that they should know that he understood that language perfectly.[15] It is evident from these variations that the story only represents the current gossip of the time, which each

[14] Croly, *Life and Times of George IV.*, published in 1830.

[15] Letter from Mr. Wm. Forde given by Fitzpatrick in *The Sham Squire*. Mr. Forde added in a postscript, "I knew Doctor O'Beirne. He was in his manner a perfect and accomplished gentleman. He was an admirable writer. I have seen some of his pamphlets. The late Doctor Plunket, Bishop of Meath, was Professor in the Irish College when Doctor O'Beirne was a student in it, and as they lived within two miles of each other, the usual courtesies of life were observed between the rival prelates. The professor outlived the pupil several years. Bishop O'Beirne died in 1822."

succeeding narrator embellished according to his fancy. We cannot disprove it, as in the case of the other stories. All that we can say is, that it is highly improbable. It is more likely either that O'Beirne was brought under Portland's notice by Lord Howe, or that his political writings, which attracted considerable attention at the time, caused him to be chosen as secretary by the newly appointed Lord Lieutenant.

Lord Portland's viceroyalty lasted only a short time, and on his return to England O'Beirne also left Ireland, and was appointed to a crown living in England. The next year, 1783, he took the degree of S.T.B. at Cambridge, and later on in the same year he married at Saint Margaret's, Westminster, Jane, the only surviving child of the Honourable Francis Stuart, third son of the seventh Earl of Moray. He had one son and two daughters, all of whom died unmarried.

There is still another story—apocryphal like the rest—which refers to this period of O'Beirne's life. In 1785 the Prince of Wales, afterwards King George IV., was married privately to Mrs. Fitzherbert, and it is confidently asserted that it was O'Beirne who officiated on that occasion. There is no documentary evidence, for in the certificate of marriage the name of the officiating clergyman is carefully cut out—presumably by Mrs. Fitzherbert herself. This story seems to have arisen in connection with the supposition that O'Beirne had received ordination in the Roman Catholic Church. It was assumed that Mrs. Fitzherbert, being a Roman Catholic, would have been disposed to secure the services of a clergyman whose Orders were, according to her ideas, valid. But there seem to have been no other grounds to go upon, and the whole thing is a matter of conjecture. Sir William Cope, who seems to have been particularly

well informed on the subject, gave it as his opinion that O'Beirne "never could have married George IV. to Mrs. Fitzherbert." [16]

O'Beirne came to Ireland once more in 1791, when he was appointed Rector of Templemichael, in which parish the town of Longford is situated. This was his native county, and it is even said that his brother was Roman Catholic priest of the parish during the time that he held the incumbency.

On the appointment of Lord Fitzwilliam to the viceroyalty in 1795, O'Beirne once more became secretary and first chaplain to the Lord Lieutenant, and almost immediately afterwards he was promoted to the bishopric of Ossory, from which he was translated in 1798 to the bishopric of Meath. At the same time he was appointed a member of the Privy Council. He now devoted himself to the affairs of our diocese with wonderful energy and conspicuous success. He did not, however, give up politics altogether. He became a strong advocate for the Union, and when a petition was presented from residents in the County Meath who objected to that measure, he drew up a "Protest," which was signed by many owners of property in the district, and was specially commended by the bishop to his clergy, because "they above all others, are interested in the success of the measure." It is at once an able and temperate exposition of the reasons which led O'Beirne and many others at that time to wish that the union of the two countries should be accomplished. It is as follows:

We, the undersigned Noblemen, Clergy, Gentlemen, Freeholders, and Inhabitants of the County Meath, having thoroughly considered the purport of certain resolutions published in the newspapers, and assuming to be the sense of the County on the proposal of a Legislative Union with Great

[16] Fitzpatrick, *Sham Squire*, second edition.

Britain, feel it a justice we owe ourselves to protest against such assumption, and to claim a right of expressing our own judgment on a measure that so materially affects our general and individual interests.

We cannot contemplate the various disasters and calamities that have so uniformly succeeded each other, for such a series of years, in this distracted country, without being impressed with a conviction that something is essentially and radically defective in our political system, and that some more effectual measures must be resorted to than have been hitherto provided, to remedy the evils to which the public state is so constantly exposed.

In the proposal of a Legislative Union, as promising to be conducive to this happy end, we see nothing to alarm us for our independence or our interests; nor can we comprehend how such a measure can be either injurious or degrading to either of the coalescing parties, while the terms, both as to constitution and commerce, are to be discussed and settled by each nation exercising its own independent powers of deliberation and decision.

We agree with some of the best and wisest men in both kingdoms in conceiving the strongest hopes that a Union so attained would remove every cause of distrust and jealousy between the two countries; that it would consolidate the power and resources of the empire, and preclude the common enemy from all hope of converting our divisions into an instrument of separation; that it would open a prospect of composing those religious dissensions to which we can trace so much of the public misery; and that it would introduce among our people English capital, English manufacture, English industry, habits and manners.

Under these impressions, we trust that, whenever his Majesty shall, in his wisdom, think proper to communicate to our legislature the result of the enlightened and temperate deliberations of the Lords and Commons of Great Britain on this momentous question, it will be received with the attention that is due to the common sovereign, and to the Parliament of a country with which we wish to be for ever united in affections and interests; and we expect that, in giving it a full and dispassionate discussion, our representatives will manifest to both kingdoms that they have nothing in view but the peace and prosperity of Ireland, as essentially inseparable from the peace and prosperity of the empire.[17]

[17] *Memoirs of Lord Castlereagh.*

Bishop O'Beirne also drew up a memorandum, which he presented to Lord Castlereagh, on the special subject of the union of the two Churches. His argument is that "the maxim laid down by Archdeacon Paley has been greedily adopted and zealously inculcated in this kingdom by all the sectaries, but particularly by the Roman Catholics. The established religion ought to be that which prevails among the majority of the people; the faith of the nation ought to be consulted, and not that of the magistrate."[18] He shows that as long as the Church of Ireland remains distinct this maxim will keep alive the expectation of our adversaries, "but let the distinction cease, and the Church of England be the only church of the empire—let this be done, and Paley's maxim, whatever the intrinsic weight it possess may be, will cease to apply." He anticipates considerable opposition from some of his brother bishops. "The present primate," he says, "as well in temper and manners as in many points of learning, may well rank with Primate Ussher. But the bench is not without some of a different description—violent, impracticable, condemning and opposing whatever does not originate from themselves, and not likely to brook any appearance of subordination to the See of Canterbury, which would be necessary to this plan." All this is a bygone controversy now, but it is at least interesting to know what were the anticipations of those who advocated that important measure.

Another subject in which he took a very great interest was the establishment of the Roman Catholic College at Maynooth. He was strongly in favour of that institution, for, he urges, "if the Roman Catholic clergy must go for their education to countries hostile to England, they will imbibe those civil prejudices,

[18] *Memoir and Correspondence of Viscount Castlereagh.*

and that spirit of hatred and resentment, of which France and Spain have uniformly availed themselves, ever since the period of the Reformation, to raise up a party for themselves, and to excite domestic disturbances in Ireland." He says that "one of the great objects of the institution was to bring the education of the Roman Catholic clergy, on whom the morals and conduct of the Roman Catholic body so exclusively depend, into contact with the government, and to subject them, as far as might be, without outraging their religious prejudices, under its control." A certain number of the Board of Trustees of Maynooth were at that time Protestants, and O'Beirne proposes that the number should be increased. "At all events, he says, "I hope and trust that the majority of the visitors will be Protestants, and that the Archbishop of Dublin, as Metropolitan of the Province, and the Bishop of Kildare, as Diocesan, will be of the number. I should also hope that, to connect the institution in some way with the University of Dublin, the provost would be a visitor, and some of its professors or fellows acting trustees. . . . The present prejudices of the Popish bishops may repugn at this introduction of Protestant prelates, but if the government is firm in requiring it, they will give way." [19] He thinks that by this method it might be possible to establish a certain amount of independence in the Irish Roman Catholic Church, and that, as most of the Popish bishops and the president of the college have been educated in France, "they will have the less objection to make the immunities of the Gallican Church, and the boundaries which it established between the spiritual and temporal power, and against the encroachments of the See of Rome, the basis of their

[19] Castlereagh, *Correspondence*.

National Church in Ireland." The good bishop lived long enough afterwards to learn that most of these his anticipations were doomed to disappointment.

Bishop O'Beirne's work in the Diocese of Meath will be treated in another chapter. A few words may be added here on his ability as a preacher. On this subject we cannot do better than quote from one who actually heard him. In one of Mrs. Piozzi's letters to a friend, she says, "Give me a hint, dear sir, a taste merely, of that stream of calumny, which, according to the Bishop of Meath, rolls down the streets of our favourite towns, taking a little fresh venom at every house it passes." She refers to a sermon preached by the bishop at Bath, and concerning it the compiler of "Piozziana" gives the following note :—

The Bishop of Meath mentioned by Mrs. Piozzi was O'Beirne, who has been some years dead. I heard the sermon in which he introduced the above-quoted passage on calumny. The figure of the stream is a happy one, but only of a piece with all his fine pulpit essays. His composition was invariably a rich specimen of the calm and correct in writing. His style, without being in the slightest degree gorgeous, was never less than elegant; his metaphors were never broken nor misapplied; every word seemed to drop from his pen precisely in its proper place; and although each paragraph was as finished in itself as it could be, he had scarcely an auditor in what is termed a refined congregation who might not have imagined that he could have written exactly as the bishop wrote. To this style his manner was admirably suited. In his action and emphasis he was never theatrical nor ever tame, but from first to last abounded in gentle earnestness. The whole discourse was in truth so engaging, and so full of charms, that people used constantly to say what a pity it was that he made his sermons so short, whereas in fact, he never preached for less than half an hour at a time. This feeling on the part of his hearers was universal, and no doubt a high compliment to his powers. The effect of what he delivered, particularly during his latter years, was heightened by his appearance. He wore not a little greyish-blue wig, as English prelates do,

but long flowing snow-white locks, and had a face like Sterne's monk, mild, pale, and penetrating, with a small sparkling eye, as keen as a viper's, while his voice—one of exquisite modulation—did all that loudness and vehemence could have done, without ever sounding as if raised to its utmost. He was altogether a man of first rate natural talents.

Quite a number of the bishop's sermons have been published, and they fully bear out the high praise which is here given. The following list of his works is taken principally from Cotton's *Fasti*.

A pamphlet, entitled "The Gleam of Comfort."

"The Crucifixion," a Poem, 4to, 1776.

"The Generous Impostor," a Comedy, 8vo, 1780.

A series of Essays (in a newspaper), under the signature of "A Country Gentleman," 1780.

"A Short History of the Last Session of Parliament." (Anonymous).

"Considerations on the Late Disturbances," by a Consistent Whig, 8vo, 1781.

"Considerations on the Principles of Naval Discipline and Courts Martial," 8vo, 1781.

A "Fast" Sermon, Dublin, 1794.

Three Charges delivered to his Clergy, in 1795, 1796, and 1797. 4to, Dublin. (These Charges were delivered while he was Bishop of Ossory. They deal largely with the subject of non-residence.)

A Circular Letter to the Clergy of the Diocese of Ossory, 4to, 1797.

The foregoing Charges and Letter, with four Occasional Sermons, printed together, 8vo, 1799.

"A Candid and Impartial Narrative of the Transactions of the Fleet, under Lord Howe." By an Officer then serving in the Fleet, 1799. (This was a vindication of the conduct of Lord Howe, published seemingly on the death of that nobleman.)

"A Sermon before the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge," 4to, 1801.

"The Ways of God to be Vindicated only by the Word of God," a Sermon. 8vo, 1804.

"A Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese of Meath," 8vo, 1805.

"A Letter to Dr. Troy, on the Coronation of Bonaparte," by Melancthon.

"The Wisdom and Justice of Ascribing to the Hand of God every event of Great Moment and Utility to Mankind," a Sermon preached on the Day of General Thanksgiving for the Victory of Trafalgar.

"A Letter from an Irish Dignitary to an English Clergyman, on the Subject of Tithes in Ireland." (Anonymous), 1807, reprinted 1822,

A Sermon at the Magdalen Asylum, Dublin, 8vo, 1807.

A Letter to the Earl of Fingall. (Anonymous). 8vo, Dublin, 1813.

"Christian Worship," a Sermon. 8vo, Bath, 1819.

"Sermons on Important Subjects," 2 vols, 8vo.

"Circular Letter to the Rural Deans of the Diocese of Meath," 1821.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MEATH IN 1799.

WHEN Bishop O'Beirne came into possession of the See of Meath, his first care was to ascertain exactly the state of the diocese. He manifestly had ideas as to the duties and powers of a bishop very different from those which had long obtained in the Church of Ireland. To his mind the Bishop was a real overseer and ruler, and his duty was to see that every one of his subordinates performed faithfully the cure of souls to which he had been appointed. He accordingly without delay issued a paper of queries, which was sent to each clergyman in the diocese, asking for information as to the services held in the several churches, the state of the church fabrics, the provision made for education, and a variety of other topics. The replies given to these queries have been preserved, and a copy of them, bound together in one volume, is to be found in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin. The Record Office also preserves two manuscripts, one containing the bishop's comments on these replies, and the other, the directions given by him in each case to the clergy at the subsequent visitation. The three documents taken together give us very complete information as to the state of the Church in Meath at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It is from these, for the most part, that the present chapter has been compiled.

The first point, which comes out very strongly indeed, was the alarming prevalence of pluralities and

non-residence. We have seen that these two evils had clung to the Church through all its history from the time of the Anglo-Norman invasion. It was never more rife than at this time. There was scarcely an important parish in Meath the incumbent of which did not possess another parish in a different diocese. Some of these lived in Meath, and were non-resident elsewhere. Others served their Meath charge by means of a curate. Others, again, wholly neglected their duty, and left their people without any spiritual provision. The Rector of Kells, for example, had a parish also in Ossory. The Incumbent of Navan lived in the Diocese of Armagh, and had a parish there. The incumbents of Athboy, Donaghpatrick, and Slane were all beneficed in Dublin; and so on, throughout the whole of the diocese. Besides these, there were some who resided in England or elsewhere, drawing their stipends from Meath, and performing their duty either by deputy or not at all.

This was a subject on which O'Beirne felt strongly. He referred to it in his Primary Charge, delivered in the Diocese of Ossory, and said that a man who absented himself from his parish, even when it was one without church or glebe-house, was "violating all that he owed to the redeemed of Christ, whom he engaged to instruct and to comfort, and forgetful of that awful Name by which he had sworn, abandoned his charge, leaving them to whatever casual instruction they could gather from others, to pick up the word by the wayside; to beg even for Baptism for their children from some charitable hand, often from ministers of another faith, while he, standing on the mere privilege of an accommodating conscience, set every other consideration at defiance."

He returned to this subject again shortly after his

appointment to Meath. Writing to Lord Castlereagh, on the 23rd of July, 1800, he says, "The radical evil of the Church of England, and what has ever since the Reformation opposed its extension, is that the parochial clergy are generally non-resident; nor can the government ever advance the salutary purpose for which a parochial clergy is appointed so effectually, as by enabling the bishops to remove this great abuse."

His efforts at enforcing residence met with considerable opposition from the parties interested, and his success at first was small, on account of the imperfection of the law; the higher courts in several cases having reversed the decisions by which he had enforced this duty. In 1807 he presented a report to the government, and in it we find that out of the ninety-two benefices in Meath at that time, only forty-five had resident incumbents, while forty-seven—that is, more than half—were non-resident. He adds the note: "There are at present instances in this diocese of great encouragement to refractoriness in this essential point of discipline, taken from some late decisions of the Court of Delegates, to which there lies an appeal from the sentence of the Consistorial Court."[1]

The difficulties which were thus presented did not deter the bishop from pursuing his purpose. As the law was shown to be ineffectual, he strenuously urged the necessity for new legislation, and with some success, for shortly after this an Act was passed by Parliament for enforcing residence, which to some extent remedied the evil. By the year 1820 the number of non-resident incumbents in Meath was reduced to twenty-two, some of whom held sinecure parishes. At the same time the residents had increased to seventy-nine, the number of benefices having increased in the

[1] *Papers relating to the Established Church in Ireland*, 1807 (Blue Book).

meantime to one hundred and one. The bishop, however, was not satisfied with the way in which the reform had been carried out. He would have preferred a more ecclesiastical method of enforcing discipline, and was in this respect a precursor of those who in the present day resent the interference of the Privy Council in Church matters. "The powers vested by the canon law," he says, "and the primitive discipline of the Church, in the archbishops and bishops, to enforce residence, when duly exercised, and no longer checked by appeals to a Court of Delegates, constituted as of late years it has been in Ireland, would have been amply sufficient to remedy the abuses arising from non-residence; and that the several archbishops and bishops would have duly availed themselves of these powers, and faithfully exercised them whenever the circumstances of the several parishes in their dioceses would admit, must appear evident from the zeal and assiduity with which they have exercised the new powers vested in them by the Act passed in the 48th of the King, for enforcing residence of spiritual persons on their benefices in Ireland. In carrying the provisions of this Act into practice, it has been seen how ineffectual all substitutions for the operation and influence of the primitive discipline of the Church must prove, and that when, in the place of the obligations to canonical obedience and a professional feeling, a clergy are required to look for the great rule of their conduct in the discharge of their spiritual duties to the enactments of Parliamentary statutes and the mere letter of the law, there can be but little hope of forming an exemplary and useful parochial ministry. There is no way of evading the regulations of such statutes, and of the temporal penalties that they provide, of which they will not

avail themselves. In this act, the time between serving the first monition to reside and the order for sequestering the profits of the benefice in case of non-compliance with the monition, leaves so many chances of defeating the wishes of the bishop, that neither that nor the immediate monitions produce any effect; and when, to avoid the consequences of the order of sequestration, the person returns himself resident, there are instances in which, to evade the penalties of the third section, he contents himself with appearing in his benefice one day in every week. But the period of three years that must intervene before he can be deprived of his benefice affords a still greater encouragement to him to disregard all proceedings against him, when he has other sources to depend on besides the profit of his benefice. To have any prospect of rendering the Act effectual, the order of sequestration should issue in one month after serving the monition in case of non-compliance, and deprivation should follow a non-compliance of twelve months." [2]

It will be seen from these extracts that the bishop had no easy task before him when he undertook the reorganization of the See of Meath. In the replies to his questions, several of the clergy try to excuse their non-residence. Some throw the blame on the late rebellion. The Vicar of Athboy, for example, says: "It is not quite two years since I got this parish. As soon as I could hire a house I came to reside. This was at the eve of the rebellion. Upon the breaking out of the rebellion most of the Protestant families fled. I did so too. The illness and death of a near relative obliged me to be absent for a considerable time this summer, but I purpose carrying your lordship's intentions into execution, and discharging my own

[2] *Papers relating to the State of the Church of Ireland*, 1820 (Blue Book).

duty." He does not explain, however, how he is going to do this, and at the same time fulfil his duty as vicar choral of Saint Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin, which office he held at the same time.

The incumbent of Rathmolyon gives his excuses very concisely. "Incumbent does not reside at present. Reasons are: advanced age, very infirm health, perturbate be times, lonely situation of the glebe-house, unspeakable terrors of the female part of incumbent's family." The parson of Agher is more diffuse. He says, "I have served my cure in person previous to the rebellion, which occasioned me to keep a curate, whose situation, having a house in a town, made it safer for him than me to attend, whose house being remote from a town was unsafe to inhabit from the two attacks made on it, though providentially repelled. I did not think it prudent to run the risque of a third, and therefore followed with my family the Wicklow regiment through their several routes. I am sorry to be obliged to answer another question of the No. 11 (as to residence), which necessarily involves me in the same predicament Saint Paul was in, namely, self-condemnation. I never had any sick and dying poor person in any place that I did not first conscientiously discharge the duties of my function, and next enquired into their several necessities, whether of medicine, wine, bread, or meat, which I immediately relieved as far as I was able, and often raised contributions that effectually relieved the parties after."

Excuses like these were not always accepted by the bishop. The following is the account of himself given by the Incumbent of Rathconrath: "I have two very small parishes, one of the Rectory and Vicarage of Rathconrath, which, although containing above 4,000 acres, yet the country has ever been so lawless, scarce

any tithe could be got in the year 1775. I served the cure of Almoritia immediately adjoining Rathconrath, for in that parish there is no church nor Protestant inhabitant, viz., Rathconrath. I resided there not many months till my cattle were houghed, and many threatening letters sent to me, and billets stuck, intimating that if I ever attempted claiming any tithes I should have the fate of my cattle. Whereupon I fled to Dublin, and in the following year, with the consent of their Graces the Lord Primate and the Archbishop of Dublin, and their Lordships the Bishops of Meath and Kildare, I solicited and obtained the chaplaincy of the Lying-in Hospital." The bishop was quite unmoved by this sorrowful tale, and administered a sharp rebuke. His note is: "Mr. Ould to be particularly cited to account for his abandoning this parish in the manner he has done, and injuring it as well in its spirituals as temporals."

In some cases, the clergy tried to hide from the bishop the fact that they were non-resident. Of the Rector of Ratoath he writes: "His manner of answering my query respecting his terrier deserves animadversion, as does indeed the whole style of his answers, and particularly his asserting that he performs occasional duty, and concealing from me that he was residing in England." And concerning Ballyboy, he writes: "What does Mr. Kimmis mean by saying that he generally resides in his glebe house? He must have a resident curate for each church, unless he chooses to do the duty of one of them constantly in a constant residence, and not occasionally, as he now appears to do."

These are just a few typical examples of the difficulties with which the bishop had to deal in this matter of non-residence. The abuse was of long

tanding, and required a strong hand to deal with it. We can only wonder that in the end O'Beirne was so uccessful in bringing about a better order of things.

In most cases of non-residence a curate of one kind r another was provided. Several of them appear to ave been not very efficient, but of course it is to be emembered that in an account like this, it is the ss efficient ones that mostly come under notice, and hat the great majority of them must have done their luty faithfully and well. Their lot was not very appy, and they were looked down upon by their ectors in a way that would not be tolerated for a noment in these days. The following extracts will how the somewhat contemptuous way in which they vere regarded by the beneficed clergy, and may perhaps ive some idea of the unpleasant position in which they vere placed.

The Vicar of Galtrim writes :—" The vicar serves is cure in person. He found a licensed curate, and eeps him, to the great satisfaction of the parishioners, he curacy being to him, poor man, a great object." n much the same strain the Incumbent of Clongill ells the bishop : " I do attend myself, and also have curate, who is not licensed. My reason for keeping im, is that the late Bishop of Meath desired I should lo so till he could procure some other situation for him s he (Mr. Garnett) was a worthy attentive man, and ad been at much expenes in settling himself as onveniently as possible to the parish."

The tragic story of the Curate of Tara is told in ew words by the incumbent. He says : " My health loes not permit me to serve the cure in person, but he duty was faithfully and conscientiously discharged, o the entire satisfaction of the parishioners, by the Reverend Mr. Nelson, who was murdered in his own

house last summer at noon day by the rebels. Since his death the duty is performed by Mr. Ingham, who lives within a short distance of the church, till your Lordship shall be pleased to grant a licence to the Rev. Mr. Woods, who has my nominations." The vicar seems quite satisfied with himself and with the way in which the duty of the parish was performed. The bishop, however, took quite another view, and cited him to the adjourned visitation, admonishing him to provide immediately resident curates for both his churches. In this case the vicar proved refractory, and eventually the bishop had to take measures for his deprivation.

The Incumbent of Wherry has a complaint against one of his curates. He says: "My curate, Mr. Maxwell, discharges his duty to the great satisfaction of his parishioners and most unwearied diligence. My other curate, Mr. Hamilton, is quite of a different character, not liked by the parish, and does not pay such attention. He is licensed, so I can't dismiss him. I take care to have the duty well attended, and I hope at your Lordship's visitation to get you to remove Mr. Hamilton." He did not find the bishop as ready to fall in with his ideas as he expected. The incumbent held also the parish of Belturbet in the Diocese of Kilmore, where he sometimes resided, but he spent most of his time in England. This method of fulfilling his duty did not commend itself to the diocesan and accordingly, he makes the note: "To take any legal steps to deprive Doctor Maxwell (the incumbent), unless he comes from England to reside." He takes no notice of the complaint against the curate.

In other cases, the incumbent seems to have known little, and probably cared less, about the character of the curate who performed for him the duties of his

office. The Vicar of Trivett reports: "I have a licenced curate. He informs me that till the late rebellion he lived in Mr. Gorges' house. I never received any complaints from the parishioners of his neglecting his duty." The bishop's note is: "He only concludes that the curate did his duty because the parishioners made no complaints, and because the curate tells him so," and he directs that the incumbent be specially cited to appear at the adjourned visitation. In the case of the parish of Moyglare, too, the bishop says: "What cause had he to call on his parishioners for the character of his curate? This curate has preferred a complaint against him. A suit must be enquired into."

It was new to the Diocese of Meath to have at its head such a vigorous ruler. The extracts given above will give some idea of the difficulty of the work that lay before him, and of the determination with which he took up the arduous task. He was met in many cases with passive resistance. Some of the clergy did not answer his queries; others absented themselves from the visitation. These were soon made to feel that the new bishop was a man with whom they could not trifle. An adjourned visitation was held, to which they were cited, and if they still proved contumacious, proceedings were at once taken against them. The immediate effect was salutary in every way, although it was only after some years of unyielding perseverance that the full effect of the bishop's reforms was made manifest.

We are not surprised to find that the church fabrics reflected in their dilapidation and decay the unsoundness of the whole body. There was scarcely a church in the whole diocese that did not require rebuilding or renovation. O'Beirne took this matter also in hand, and we will see later on that never, in the whole history

of the diocese, was there such an era of church building as during his episcopate.

No less than eighty-three parishes were without glebe-houses, and the worst of this was that the want of them was not felt, for why should a glebe-house be built when there was no resident clergyman to inhabit it? In some cases the house which did exist was quite unsuitable. The following is the account given by the Incumbent of Dunboyne: "I have an acre of glebe joining the churchyard, on which is built an old cabin, built by subscription for a school-house, which was inhabited by my former clerk, until I came to reside in my parish; in which house I have continued ever since, and is now in the most ruinous condition, occasioned by the vengeance of the late rebels exercised on it. I built a good stable and cow house, with other offices, all of which were destroyed but the stable, and I am sure no other clergyman will ever reside in so poor a cabin. I have planted an orchard and made a very good garden, which is all that is valuable in my possession." The bishop was unmoved by this tale of woe, cited the incumbent to his adjourned visitation, and there censured him "for contempt, and for a total neglect of his parish."

The account of the house and land at Loughcrew is worth quoting. The incumbent was Mr. Moor Smith, who held at the same time a benefice in the Diocese of Armagh. He says: "There was a glebe formerly belonging to the parish of Loughcrew of four acres, adjoining the churchyard, in Mr. Dutton's avenue, which was exchanged, as I am informed, many years ago, for twenty acres of land in the same estate, lying together about half a mile from the church, subject to a yearly rent of £8. The deed of exchange was never perfected, but the incumbents have enjoyed

it undisturbed from the beginning. There is no house on the present glebe, except a very wretched thatched cabin, unfit and incapable of being made fit for the residence of a family. I am informed it had been inhabited by the incumbent formerly. I do not reside in that cabin, nor have I been able to procure any residence in that union since I became possessed of it, which is little more than a year, though I have used my best endeavours for that purpose."

The glebe-house of Killucan was transformed into a barrack, and a Hessian regiment was quartered there. The rector resided in Tuam, in a parish which he had in that diocese. He kept as curate a Mr. O'Burne, who lived in Kinnegad, "availing myself of the protection of the military quartered there." The literary attainments of this clergyman must have been very small, for the bishop's note book has the reminder: "To speak to him privately about the ortography of his answers." It will be noted that the bishop himself spells the word "ortography" in a way which, though at one time counted correct, was already obsolete in his days.

Where the income was derived from tithes, and this was the case in most parishes, it was gathered from an unwilling people, and was sometimes farmed out to Roman Catholic collectors, who agreed to pay the incumbent a fixed sum, making whatever profit they could for themselves. A more objectionable method could scarcely have been devised, and it proved a cause of frequent disturbance, sometimes ending in bloodshed. This was specially the case in Westmeath.

The church services were reduced to the fewest possible. The Holy Communion was administered mostly once in three months—in some places not so often. In the larger churches however, there was a

monthly communion. Few of the church festivals were observed, except Christmas Day and Good Friday. In two or three churches they had service on New Year's Day and on Ash Wednesday, but no incumbent mentions service on Ascension Day, nor does Whitsunday seem to have been observed as a time for the celebration of Holy Communion. In all these points Bishop O'Beirne set about effecting whatever improvements were possible. He ordered services to be held in the principal parishes on Wednesdays and Fridays. He notes how in Athlone they used at one time to have daily service, and enquires why this has been discontinued. He calls attention in several places to the disproportion between the church population and the number of communicants. In Enniskeen he found the curious arrangement of the bishop allowing a yearly payment to the dissenting minister for looking after the people. He simply states the fact without any comment. Altogether it must have been a new experience for the clergy of Meath to have a bishop who thus interested himself in every department of the work, and who was a true overseer of the work of God.

In the matter of education he was equally alert. The Diocesan School was at that time conducted at Trim. The bishop puts down as subjects to be enquired into: "Diocesan Schoolmaster—What the amount of his appointment? In what state the diocesan school house is, and if he inhabits it? What number of scholars he keeps, and how many are educated according to the institution?" At the diocesan visitation the following note is made:—"Rev. Mark Wainwright admonished to have the objects of the school carried fully and *bona fide* into effect. That for that purpose he give immediate notice that the school is open for

day boys, and that he make immediate preparation for the reception of boarders."

It was reported of Navan School that "Rev. Mr. Preston, master of the school, does not keep school himself, but employs Rev. Mr. Toomey." Thereupon the bishop makes the note: "To enquire of Dr. Duigenan as to the legality of giving the endowed school to a person who neither keeps a school nor lives in the house, but employs a deputy. If an abuse, what steps must be taken to remedy it? To enquire who are the trustees, and who are the visitors? If he has taken out a licence from my court, or holds in any manner under me?" It does not appear what was the result of all these enquiries, but if he effected any reformation, it must have been short-lived, for fifty years later the Royal Commissioners reported that "this endowment presented one of the most remarkable instances of an abused trust."

With regard to the ordinary parish schools, O'Beirne endeavoured to insist that every clergyman should establish a school in his parish. At the visitation he admonished the various rectors and vicars that they must each have a parish schoolmaster. To urge that there were no Protestant children in the parish was not accepted as a sufficient excuse. The Incumbent of Moymet, for instance, gave this as his reason for not having a parochial school. His parish was a sinecure, for he had no church, and not a solitary Protestant parishioner. The bishop, however, insisted that he should fulfil his duty in this way all the same. "If a Protestant schoolmaster cannot be got for forty shillings, he must give more, or teach school himself. He is sworn to get a master, or to teach himself." One cannot help asking, what kind of teacher did the incumbent expect to get for two pounds a year?

Some of the replies throw a curious light on the qualifications expected in a schoolmaster, and the emolument which was considered to be a sufficient remuneration for his services. The Incumbent of Balroddan writes that he would like to get "a man of good parts and moral character, and fully capable to perform the duties of his station." He offers the noble salary of twenty pounds a year, on condition that the schoolmaster fulfils also the duties of parish clerk, and seems to be surprised that after all this generosity he was unable to find anyone to come up to his high standard. His neighbour of Moyglare, however, goes one better than this. He says, "I have not a Protestant schoolmaster, nor could I procure one, though I offered seven pounds a year, a sum I pay to a master of the school in my own parish in the Diocese of Tuam, where I have established a Sunday school. I mention these circumstances as presumptions of my having the same good disposition towards the parishioners of Moyglare, which I carried into effect for some time by paying the Protestant schoolmaster. I had then, besides the usual forty shillings a year, a penny a head for every child of the parish without distinction he taught on Sunday mornings, and the number who attended him was about twenty; but this continued only a few months, for he died about six years since, and I found the same impracticable ever since. For a time I paid a Roman Catholic master for teaching the Church of his persuasion those fundamental principles of religion in which Christians of all sects are agreed, but he did not receive the encouragement he expected from his people, and therefore left them."

Besides the instruction given in the parochial schools, which was evidently intended for all classes—

Protestant and Roman Catholic alike—O'Beirne insisted on the duty of each clergyman himself giving religious instruction to the children of his own people. The replies given under this head are some of them curious and interesting. The Vicar of Oldcastle says, "I have a schoolmaster and pay him a salary. He teaches the children to say the Church Catechism, and brings them to the church, and leaves to the clergyman to explain it. It is no easy matter to get these sort properly qualified." The rector of Newtown Fertullagh goes more into detail. He says, "With respect to the public religious instruction of the children of the parish, I am obliged to acknowledge some neglect. I have certainly too remissly insisted, and their parents perhaps have been too backward in sending them to church for that purpose. During one summer only out of three did I regularly succeed in bringing a few of them together on Sundays, after the celebration of Divine service, when my examination was such as appeared to myself best calculated to discover what they knew, and to suggest to them what they knew not. I have since thought that the printed explanation by Stopford would prove an important help to them, and have procured a sufficient number of them, of which I have not yet made use. I must, however, in extenuation, observe that the children who attend me were not neglected by their parents, but had been properly instructed in the Church Catechism; that the number of those in the parish who are of age to profit or to need this mode of instruction is extremely small; and that the church of an adjacent parish, from its proximity to the most populous part of mine, is habitually resorted to by many of my parishioners." The neighbouring parish here referred to is doubtless Clonfadforan. The rector there says; "The children

in my parish are instructed in the principles of their religion by their parents, being chiefly Methodists. I have lately examined them in the Church Catechism, and found them instructed."

The only other officer about whom information was asked was the parish clerk, and under this head some of the replies are most amusing. In Loughcrew, his qualifications are said to be "moderate and much on a level with the generality of clerks in country churches." In Oldcastle, he was "very well qualified, but in a bad state of health, and not well able to sing the psalms." The clerk at Rathcore, we are told, "reads tolerably well; he does not attempt to sing." In Trivett, he is said to be "perfectly superannuated." In Moyglare, the vicar writes, "The parish clerk is as sufficient as parish clerks in general are, who, to do them justice, are shamefully deficient in one part of their duty, that of psalmody, which, from the manner they perform it, instead of exciting devotion, has often the contrary effect on light minds." The parish clerk of Kingscourt has the pre-eminence among them all: "He is a well-conducted man, but the worst clerk in this or any other diocese."

The following account of the charities of Athboy is worth reproducing:—"I know of no charitable foundation except a bequest of £10 per annum by a Mr. Cusack, for apprenticing children, viz., two boys yearly. This money is regularly paid by the governors of Stephen's Hospital, Dublin. To that hospital Mr. Cusack left a handsome estate near the town of Athboy several years ago. One of the Bligh family bequeathed £1,500, the interest of which was to be distributed amongst the poor of the parish. The poor received this interest for some time, but as the money was not willed to trustees, the agent, one of the Tandys, kept

he principal, and refused to pay the interest any nger. Some time after this, another of the Tandys, hinking his relation's conduct disgraceful to the family ame, left £1,500 to replace this money, but he committed the same error in not naming trustees, of which dvantage was taken by Tandy of Johnsbrook, in my arish, who refused to pay principal or interest. Such re the accounts I have received of these transactions. Within these two years there have been some houses alled alms houses, erected in this town by Lord Darnley. They are wretchedly built, and have been n an unfinished state for some time. They are, however inhabited, and there is a grocer's shop kept in one f them, with a licence board over the door, though hey are called alms houses ! ! !"

Putting all these extracts together, we can form a airly accurate picture of church life in Meath at the eginning of the nineteenth century. It is evident hat things were at the lowest possible ebb. The eneficed clergy non-resident, and the duty performed y curates whose emoluments were altogether inufficient for the position in which they were placed. he churches dilapidated and unsightly. The services ew and slovenly. The psalmody left to the efforts f incompetent parish clerks. One cannot help ondering how the Church ever survived. We have lready seen how, more than once, she was brought ow by attacks from without. We see at this time ow she was abased by those of her own house. Twenty ears later, when Bishop O'Beirne was near his end, l this was altered. Thanks to his energy and nthusiasm, the old abuses were to a great extent wept away, and in the Providence of God he as spared long enough to see with his own eyes the ward of his labours.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Twenty-five Years of Progress.

The story of Bishop O'Beirne's episcopate, extending over a period of about twenty-five years, is the story of continuous improvement and reform. At the outset he announced what his course of action was to be, and to the end he never for a moment faltered or flinched. How much need there was for improvement we have already seen in the last chapter. The evils that were then complained of were not new. Non-residence, pluralities, ruinous churches, want of glebe-houses—the Irish Church had suffered from all these things from the first day that Englishmen had mixed themselves up in her affairs. One could scarcely hope then that abuses of such long standing would disappear all in a moment. But O'Beirne was a man of great strength of will and earnestness of purpose, and he set himself resolutely to the task that lay before him. He had intense love for the Church, and it grieved him to see the desolation that had been brought about by the neglect of many generations. The result of his labour was that at the end of his episcopate he could point triumphantly to changed conditions all round.

He first attacked the non-residents, with a success which we have already noted. We need not be surprised to learn that he encountered considerable opposition. Cumbrous and tedious law proceedings were often necessary when clergymen proved contumacious, and there were cases in which these

impediments were used to the utmost. In this connection, it is interesting to note that the bishop, in one case at least, contemplated the use of the ecclesiastical punishment of excommunication to be inflicted on those who refused to submit to his authority. We have no means of finding out whether he actually put the excommunication into force, but that he was minded to do so is shown by the following letter from his chancellor, Doctor Duigenan :

MY LORD,

There is no doubt that you have full authority to excommunicate Mr. Clewloe for his contumacy in not appearing, but he must be suspended prior to his excommunication. (See 71 canon). I think your Lordship should proceed against him according to the Non-residence Act of last session, but, perhaps this may become unnecessary by the proceedings already in progress against him.

I beg that your Lordship will present my most humble respects to Mrs. O'Beirne and the young ladies.

I have the honour to be,
My Lord,
Your most faithful and obedient Servant,
PATK. DUIGENAN.

Henrietta Street, Dublin,
December 30th, 1808. [1]

Mr. Clewloe was Incumbent of Vastina, and it would appear that the bishop acted on his chancellor's advice and deprived him, for we find that six months later than the date of this letter a new clergyman was appointed to the parish.

Connected with the subject of non-residence was that of the want of glebes and glebe-houses. At the very first visitation therefore a large number of the clergy were admonished to build. As time went on, the

[1] Record Office, Dublin.

bishop kept urging the necessity of having a proper residence for the clergyman in every parish, until at length he had procured the erection of no less than seventy-two new houses in the diocese. When a house had been built in a parish, it became possible for the bishop to insist that the clergyman should occupy it. As long as the parishes were without glebe-houses, the constant excuse of the non-resident was that he could get no house in his parish in which it was possible for him to dwell.

He was equally successful in the matter of churches. The large number of fifty-seven—that is, considerably more than one-half of the total number of churches—were erected during his episcopate. The architectural designs of these buildings left much to be desired. They are, indeed, it must be confessed, hopelessly uninteresting and featureless. We cannot help regretting that in some cases the old churches were not preserved. But while we may thus have misgivings from the aesthetic point of view, we cannot but admit that practically it was a great boon to the Church to have these plain and barn-like, but sound and serviceable, buildings for the celebration of public worship, instead of the ruinous structures with which she had to be contented for so long. There is a tablet in Kilshine Church, which commemorates the building of that edifice, and sets forth the work which the bishop accomplished in the diocese. It is as follows :—

The rebuilding and restoring of this Parish Church,
After it had laid in ruin for upwards of a century,
Were the effects of the pious exertions of
That excellent Prelate,
The Right Honourable and Most Reverend Father in God,
Doctor Thomas Lewis O'Beirne,
Lord Bishop of Meath,
Who in the conscientious discharge

Of the functions of his high and important office
Not only caused many other Churches in this Diocese
To be rebuilt and restored,
But procured for that most respectable Body,
The Reverend the Parochial Clergy,
Residences and Glebes within their respective Livings,
Suitable as far as it was possible to their situations,
Thereby enabling them duly to discharge the duties of
Resident Protestant Clergymen,
And to dispense to their Parishioners of that Persuasion
The invaluable comforts of
Our Blessed Religion.
Aided by a pecuniary grant of 1600 from the Board of First Fruits
Obtained through the Intercession of His Lordship the Bishop of Meath,
John Pollock, of Mountainstown, Esq.,
Accomplished the rebuilding of this Church,
Which was restored,
Ann. Dom. 1815.

In 1807 there was a return made to the government giving the state of the Diocese of Meath. A similar return was furnished in 1820. The phraseology of the summary in both these documents is identical, and is manifestly copied one from the other, but the numbers are very different, and comparing them one with the other, we see what wonderful progress had been made in the interval.

In the report of 1807, we read:

The Diocese of Meath consists of 92 benefices, 46 of which are unions. On these benefices, 45 incumbents actually reside. Of the 47 who do not reside, 10 have no glebe-houses, but live sufficiently near to their respective benefices to discharge their duties without inconvenience. 19 have other livings on which they reside, and hold by faculty. 13 are absent with permission; 2 without permission; 2 benefices are vacant; and 1 is a sinecure. There are 90 churches, 37 glebe-houses, 75 glebes, and 17 benefices without glebes. There are 12 benefices without churches, 54 without glebe-houses, and 17

without glebes. There are likewise in the Diocese of Meath, 13 benefices of different denominations without churches, without glebe-houses, and without any ecclesiastical income whatever.

With this, let us now compare the Report of 1820. The word " dispensation " is substituted for " faculty ; " otherwise the paragraph is repeated word for word :—

The Diocese of Meath consists of 101 benefices, 42 of which are unions. On these benefices 79 incumbents actually reside. Of the 22 who do not reside, 2 have no glebe-houses, but live sufficiently near to their respective benefices to discharge their duties without inconvenience. 10 have other livings, in which they reside, and hold by dispensation, 6 are absent with permission ; 2 without permission, 1 benefice is vacant, and 1 is a sinecure. There are 94 churches, 83 glebe-houses 95 glebes, and 6 benefices without glebes. There are 11, benefices without churches, 18 without glebe-houses, and 6 without glebes. There are likewise in the Diocese of Meath, 13 benefices of different denominations without churches, without glebe-houses, and without any ecclesiastical income whatever.

The following lists are given in Bishop O'Beirne's own handwriting in a book preserved in the Record Office, Dublin. The date is not given, but the account must have been drawn up sometime towards the close of his episcopate.

IMPROVEMENTS IN THE STATE OF THE DIOCESE OF MEATH SINCE THE YEAR 1799.

GLEBES PROCURED FOR PARISHES THAT NEVER HAD ANY, OR NOT SUFFICIENT FOR BUILDING.

Donagh Patrick.
Painestown.
Ballymaglasson.
Dunboyne.
Newtown Fertullagh.
Tullamore.
Vastina.
Kilkenny West.

:	*Drumraney Perpetual Curacy.
nagan Perpetual Curacy.	Wherry Perpetual Curacy.
Perpetual Curacy.	Kilbixy Perpetual Curacy.
ı Perpetual Curacy.	Kilbeggan.
:e.	Leney.
ary's Drogheda.	Kilbrew.
	Rahan Perpetual Curacy.
ıall Perpetual Curacy.	Moat, a House, Offices, and
ar.	Garden in the town.
st.	Ardagh Perpetual Curacy.
Perpetual Curacy.	Kilbride Pilate.
' Perpetual Curacy.	

TE.—The four perpetual curacies marked with an : are erased in the original document.]

GLEBE-HOUSES BUILT OR PURCHASED SINCE 1799.

ı Patrick.	Skryne.	Kilbrew.	
m.	Tara.	Rathbeggan.	
ey.	Knockmark.[2]	Ballymaglasson.	
len.	Galtrim.	Dunboyne.	
:own.	Kilmore.	Moymet.	
	Moyglare.	Laracor.	
wn.	Agher.	Athboy.	
wn.	Ratoath.	Rathmolyon.	
on.	Rathconnell.	Ballyloughloe.	
ll.	Ardnurcher.	Drumraney.[2]	
ia.	Clara.	Athlone.	
own Delvin.	Killoughey.	Tessauran.	
ar.	Durrow.	Wherry.	
st.	Tullamore Kilbride.	Saint Mary's,	
foran.	Kilbeggan.	Drogheda.	
	Newtown Fertullagh	Colpe.	
le.	Vastina.	Kilbixey.	
n.	Ballymore.	Leney.	
ı.	Kilkenny West.	Knockmark.[2]	
re.	Rathcondra.	Kilcleagh.	Money granted for building.
ar.	Drumraney.[2]	Ardagh.	
		Killohangan	

ill be noted that the Parishes of Knockmark and Drumraney occur his list, evidently a mistake:

NEW CHURCHES BUILT SINCE 1799.

Donogh Patrick.	Killiagh.	Tissauran.
Kilmainham Wood.	Tullamore Kilbride.	Gallen.
Kilshiney.	Colpe.	Killonghey.
Ardagh.	Kilbrady.	Vastina.
Skryne.	Stonehall.	Knockmark.
Rathbeggan.	Castlelost, Beggar's	Rathcondra.
Ballymaglasson.	Bridge.	Bunowen.
Mayne.	Churchtown.	Kilbride Pilate.
	Drumraney.	

CHURCHES REBUILT SINCE 1799.

Kells.	Oldcastle.	Leney.
Dunshaughlin.	Clonard.	Ballyloughloe.
Kentstown.	Rathwire.	Forgney.
Enniskeen.	Drumcree.	Moate, enlarged.
Kilmoon.	St. Mary's, Drogheda	Duleek.
Agher.	Mullingar.	Tara, rebuilding.
Kilbrew.	Ballyboy	Ratoath.
Trim.	Kilbeggan.	Castlepollard.
Navan.	Almoritia.	

Killohangan, Bannagher, Castle Town } Votes of Vestry passed for Rebuilding them on Loans from the First Fruits.

When we examine these long lists, we get some idea of how great a debt the Diocese of Meath owes to Bishop O'Beirne. We see that there is scarcely a parish within its bounds which does not at this present moment show some token of his energy and zeal. He found the diocese in a state of disorder and decay: he left it well organized and efficient. Indeed we may say of Meath to-day that it is what Bishop O'Beirne made it. Other bishops, before his time and since, may have surpassed him in some ways, for we have had amongst them profound scholars, brilliant orators, and great writers; but as a ruler and shepherd

souls, we may safely say of him that he was the atest bishop that Meath has ever seen.

But we are not to suppose that O'Beirne spent all energies on externals, such as the building of ırches and the providing of residences. In other pects, too, he aimed at raising his diocese to a high te of efficiency. We have seen that he himself had ıarkable gifts as a preacher, and we find that he leavoured to promote the cultivation of preaching ver amongst his clergy. In 1810 he made this the)ject of his Visitation Charge, and a copious extract m that document will be of interest, not only for the ıt which it throws on the character of the bishop l the state of his diocese, but also for the information ich it contains about the state of the whole Church Ireland at that time.

He takes for his text the prayer, "That God would pleased to illuminate us all in our several stations His church with true knowledge and understanding His Word, and that both by our preaching and ing we may set it forth and show it accordingly." : speaks of the duty of censuring sin, and says:

There is no part of our function that requires to be managed h more meekness of wisdom, as the apostle beautifully)resses it, than the reprobation of vice, and the checking the dissolute and profane when in the ordinary commerce)ociety, in which we must engage, they give a loose to their ious habits, and insult us with licentious and irreligious con-sation. Within the precincts of your respective cures, l among your own parishioners, the call of duty is different. ere, no flagrant violation of the public morals, no professed nity to our holy religion, no open or avowed contempt of its :h, its discipline, or its ordinances, should ever elude your ervation or escape your censure. No rank should be too h to induce you to overlook the pernicious example set your flock . . . Open rebuke should seldom be tried : it uld never be tried until private remonstrance shall have

failed. . . . Neither will the spirit of the times admit of your enforcing that public discipline which in the earlier and more pious days of the Reformation provided for the exemplary punishment of notable crimes and notorious contumacy. Should the notoriety and the publicity of their delinquency bear you out, do not suffer them to profane the Blessed Sacrament, but privately warn them not to present themselves at the Holy Table, that you may not be necessitated to refuse them the Bread and Wine, as the rubric, which is law for you, directs you to do in all instances of open and notorious evil livers.

From this we may conclude that the bishop desired to see in each parish something of that discipline which he was endeavouring to establish in the diocese. We have no means of knowing how far such an effort was made, or if made, how far it was successful. Probably, in many cases he received no great co-operation from the clergy. They had been too long accustomed to a lax discipline, and they were too many of them offenders themselves, to enter much into the spirit of a reform such as the bishop desired. Yet we can scarcely think that these weighty admonitions were altogether without result, delivered as they were in such impressive language, and backed with such an excellent example.

He does not appear to have had much admiration for the training that divinity students got in those days, for he says that " from the course of studies in which persons destined for Orders are engaged previous to their admission to the ministry, and which, it is to be lamented, is so very unappropriate to the functions for which they are designed, it is not to be expected that immediately on their nomination to a cure of souls they should possess that knowledge of the Scriptures and of the works that have been written to interpret and illustrate them, that would enable them to become competent teachers of the Word." He suggests,

as the safest method, to begin by selecting from the works of the great masters in the art of preaching who have gone before them, the matter if not the form of their public discources. But discretion, he says, is needful in selection, for "what can be so lamentable as to see a congregation of farmers, mechanics, and labourers, frustrated of every hope of improvement they indulge in at the return of every Sabbath, by a minister who selects for them some of the highly finished compositions with which such preachers as Blair so powerfully affected, and so luminously instructed the refined audience to whom they addressed their sermons."

About five years before the delivery of this charge, Dean Kirwan, the celebrated preacher, had passed away. He it was of whom Grattan said that, "he came to interrupt the repose of the pulpit, and he shakes one world with the thunder of the other." Like O'Beirne, he had begun life as a member of the Church of Rome. Like him, too, he had gone to Saint Omer's College for his education. O'Beirne left that college in 1768; Kirwan left it in 1771; so there is the possibility that they may have been both in that seminary at the same time. All this renders the following criticism of Kirwan the more interesting. It is evident, from what the bishop says, that the dean had many imitators. Indeed, it is said that he founded a new school of pulpit eloquence in the Irish Church. O'Beirne, however, was by no means inclined to encourage the new style of oratory, and his strictures are of his usual vigorous kind.

You will not take for your model (he says), those pompous haranguers who always declaim, but never discourse nor talk to their hearers—who mount the pulpit on stilts—who despise all use of natural and familiar language, as

belonging to a flat or creeping style—and who place all the perfection of pulpit eloquence, some in an unceasing flow of rounded periods, some in epigrammatic points and well turned conceits, some in repeated flashes of brilliant expressions, strained metaphors, and figures so far-fetched as to defy all application.

An attempt has been lately made in this country to form a school of this false and tinsel school of pulpit eloquence. The great master of that school, although possessed of great natural powers to move the passions, to amuse the fancy, and to captivate the ear, yet was unqualified from the course of his early studies for filling the pulpit in the character of a Protestant parochial minister. He was uneducated and unexercised in that species of eloquence that peculiarly belongs to it. His attempt was to introduce the declamatory, florid, and highly ornamented style of the French preachers, and their theatrical manner and vehement gesticulations, instead of the sober, modest, chastened style, manner and delivery, that distinguishes the fathers of our Church, that are suited to the spirit of our reformed religion; less impassioned, but more lastingly impressive; full of weight and gravity, and necessarily adopted by all who address the reason and the conviction, before they attempt the heart and its affections. His discourses were like most French discourses—pictures of the age, and invectives against its follies and disorders, more than vehicles for conveying Gospel truths and Gospel principles, or than enforcement of Gospel duties. . . . These were the "thunders by which he broke the slumber of the pulpit,"—(an affected and invidious phrase so often quoted)—and kept those awake who probably would have slept with the young man in the Acts of the Apostles, if Saint Paul himself preached the *Gospel* to them. This extraordinary man—for such he doubtless was—had for some time many imitators among the younger clergy, who were ambitious to share in the celebrity he had acquired. But, like all imitations, they copied all his faults and imperfections, without the fascinations of genius that in him covered them all.

In the concluding part of the charge, the bishop deals with sectaries, and with the duty of preaching against them; but he adds the warning that where they have not made their appearance, "it may be the more prudent way not to force them on the notice

of your parishioners;" adding that "in most parts of this diocese they are unknown."

Meath probably had to thank the sparseness of her population more than anything else for her comparative freedom from sectaries. In other parts of the country, and possibly in parts of Meath also, they seem to have been particularly active about this time. O'Beirne's method of dealing with them was to increase the earnestness and zeal of the clergy. He addressed a letter to his rural deans in 1821 on this subject. His words would be applicable in some respects to the present day. He says:—

> It is the reproach of her enemies that her clergy have in general become so secularized that they have lost the stamp of their holy profession, and we every day hear it admitted by her nominal friends that it is not without reason that sectaries and seceders arrogate to themselves the exclusive praise of that zealous discharge of the pastoral duties, to which every minister of the Gospel pledges himself, on his having the care of souls committed to him in the Lord.
>
> As to what depends on me, what I have chiefly at heart is to see, before I shall be called away to answer for my own stewardship, the establishment of a parochial clergy in the diocese, who should manifest the zeal of those sectaries and seceders, without the fanaticism and excluding spirit that serve only to render their zeal dangerous, and destructive of all Christian morality and true religion. It would be to see that every officiating minister whom I should license should be as distinguished for assiduity and earnestness in preserving all who are committed to his charge from being tainted and led away by false teachers, who are daily multiplying around us, as those teachers are in gaining proselytes from the Established Church. While professing to teach her articles of faith, they pervert them as they pervert the Scriptures, and deduce from them doctrines which the pious and learned compilers of them, and all their most distinguished successors, have uniformly condemned as unknown to the Gospel.
>
> Severe must be the account which every individual amongst us shall have to give, when his ministry is ended with his life, if he shall be found to have discharged that ministry with the

torpor and luke-warmness that so evidently bespeak the total absence of that primitive spirit, to which, I fear, we are in a great measure to attribute the apathy in all matters of their religion that characterizes so many amongst the Protestants of this country, and the little attachment they show to the pure and reformed church into which they have been baptized.

The " sectaries and seceders " which the bishop had immediately in his mind when he made these observations were the agents of the Hibernian Bible Society. It is a fundamental principle of that society as at present constituted that it is simply the handmaid of other organizations, and that it should therefore confine itself to the task of circulating the Scriptures, without note or comment. In the early years of the nineteenth century, however, things were differently managed, and the methods of the society failed to commend themselves to many sober-minded Churchmen. Remonstrances were made from time to time, and animated discussions took place both in the committee and at the public meetings of the society. In the end, the Irish bishops as a body withdrew their patronage, and severed their connection with that organization. O'Beirne tells us that " the management of the Hibernian Bible Society has entirely fallen into the hands of sectaries and seceders, and the establishment of their auxiliary societies, wherever it takes place through the country, has for its immediate object the increase of the number of their proselytes, and the extension and prevalence of their doctrines."

It was characteristic of Bishop O'Beirne that his opposition to the methods of the Bible Society did not take the shape of mere destructive criticism, but of vigorous counter organization. He directed each rural dean to form a deanery branch of the Diocesan Bible Society, which was affiliated with the Association

for Promoting Christian Knowledge. They were to "make every exertion to procure the countenance and co-operation of the respectable laymen in their respective deaneries, and their presence at the meetings appointed by the rural dean for the promotion of the important object of the society, that of disseminating the Scriptures, the Book of Common Prayer, and tracts breathing the genuine spirit and inculcating the pure morals and unadulterated doctrines of the Gospel." The clergy were all directed to aid in this, and the bishop adds: "I could not experience a more sensible mortification than to find that in some instances the rural dean cannot induce the clergy of his deanery to take any active part in the formation of these societies, or to attend the meetings; and I repeat that the clergyman who betrays such a want of feeling of what he owes to his own character and to his sacred profession, must expect to have his name brought by me before his brethren at the visitation, with the stigma he so justly deserves."

The friction with the Bible Society continued for a considerable time, and some strong language was used on both sides. Conciliatory resolutions were passed at the meetings of the society. but the language of individual members who took part in the debate scarcely accorded with the moderate tone of these resolutions. One speaker, a beneficed clergyman of the Diocese of Dublin, referring to the secession of his own diocesan, spoke of it as "the lopping off of rotten branches giving fresh vigour to the tree, and a promise of more abundant and better fruit." Happily these differences have long since been adjusted. Even the "Meath Bible Society," formed, as we have seen, in direct opposition to the Hibernian Bible Society, is now an auxiliary to that institution.

This controversy with the Hibernian Bible Society took place in the year 1821, when the bishop was already an old man, and indeed was nearing his end. It tells us how he retained his energy to the last, and was keenly alive to the welfare of his diocese.

It is to Bishop O'Beirne that we owe the first establishment of clerical meetings in the Church of Ireland. We have no records to show whether he actually held such assemblies in the Diocese of Meath, but the presumption is that he did so, for during the short time that he presided over the Diocese of Ossory he established them there, and they continued as long as he was bishop of that See. In the circular which he issued on that occasion he speaks of the project as one which he had "very much at heart." He drew up the following rules for the conduct of the meetings, and we learn from them that they were carried on practically in the same way as the clerical meetings of the present day.

PLAN OF THE MEETING.

To interpret and explain the New Testament, beginning by the Gospel of St. Matthew, and going through four chapters at least at each meeting.

Each person to come prepared to expound the original Greek and acquainted with such commentaries as he can procure, according to his convenience and means.

The explanation to be followed by a lecture on the chapter that shall have been expounded; which lecture the bishop is to prepare.

To conclude with an enquiry into the principal events, and the principal agents of the several ages of the Church, beginning by the first age.

The meeting to be held in the Cathedral Library (which is open for the convenience of those who wish to consult whatever books may be found there proper for the occasion) and to dine with the bishop. [2]

[2] Madden, *Memoir of the late Rev. Peter Roe.*

In the year 1821, Bishop O'Beirne undertook is last confirmation tour. There is a short account f it in *Saunder's News Letter* of August the fourth in hat year, which may here be reproduced :—

The Lord Bishop of Meath, attended by the Rev. Mr. akenham as chaplain, arrived in Mullingar on Saturday last order to consecrate the church; but unhappily some cirumstance occurred which prevented its accomplishment. owever, his Lordship, anxious for the accommodation of the arishioners, has licensed the church, until an opportunity shall ccur, when he will perform the ceremony as he had originally ttended. He preached on Sunday on the subject of Conrmation. To show the hallowed respect which every member f the Protestant Church should feel for her ordinances, the ishop of Meath has ventured, almost at the risk of his life, o journey from one end of the diocese to the other, to perform he ceremony of Confirmation.

Bishop O'Beirne died at Ardbraccan on the 17th of February, 1823. A tablet erected to his memory in the Parish Church very fittingly recounts he progress of the diocese during his episcopate as he most appropriate record of his life. It reads as ollows :—

Near this Place are interred the Mortal Remains of
The Most Reverend and Right Honorable
THOMAS LEWIS O'BEIRNE, D.D.,
Lord Bishop of Meath,
The Chief Objects of whose Life were
To promote Happiness in his Family by Affection and Benevolence,
And to diffuse Piety and Holiness through his Diocese,
By guiding and directing his Parochial Clergy
In the Performance of the Awful Duties
Incumbent on them as Ministers of the United Church.
During the 25 Years that he presided over this See
There were erected in it
72 Glebe Houses and 57 Churches
He died February 17th, 1823,
Aged 76 Years.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

The Tithe War.

On the death of Bishop O'Beirne speculation was naturally rife as to his successor in the See of Meath. Among the names mentioned was that of the brother of the Duke of Wellington. The following paragraph appeared in the *Dublin Evening Post* on February 27th, 1823, just ten days after the death of the bishop:

THE NEW BISHOP.

Some of the London papers state that the Irish Bishopric of Meath, vacant by the recent death of Doctor O'Beirne, has been offered to the Honourable and Reverend Gerard Wellesley, brother of our illustrious chief governor. The *Morning Chronicle* intimates that the offer has been accepted and that the appointment has already actually taken place.

In this case the forecast—for it was nothing more—was mistaken. The choice of the Crown was the Right Reverend Nathaniel Alexander, who had been consecrated Bishop of Clonfert in 1801, and translated to Down and Connor in 1823. He was the eldest son of Robert Alexander, Esquire, elder brother to James first Earl of Caledon, and was uncle to our present illustrious Primate, to whom he had a remarkable resemblance in his personal appearance. Like most of his predecessors, he became a member of the Privy Council. He continued to rule the See of Meath until his death, which took place in 1840.

It was well for the diocese that it had been so thoroughly organized under O'Beirne, for in common with the whole Church of Ireland, it was now called

on to pass through a time of great trial, due to what is known as the tithe war. The population of the country was at this time rapidly increasing, but agriculture, which was then as now the principal industry, was in a backward state, and consequently the productiveness of the land was not advancing in the same proportion. The result was that a large number of the people were in such a condition that a single unpropitious season was sufficient to bring them face to face with the horrors of famine. In 1822 the suffering became so great that Parliament voted a sum of half a million pounds for the alleviation of Irish distress. Such a time has always been in Ireland a season of agitation and unrest, and this was no exception to the rule. The malcontents found a leader in Daniel O'Connell, who at this time was beginning to make his influence felt, and under his auspices an organization was founded, known as the "Catholic Association." Its object was two-fold: the obtaining of Catholic emancipation, and the abolition of tithes.

The former of these, though it was perhaps of the greater importance politically, does not concern us here. It was a measure that must have been passed sooner or later, and the mistake made was that it was too long delayed, and in the end only granted in response to agitation, so that the disturbers of the country could boast that it had been extorted by force. The Protestants of Ireland, who had so administered the penal laws that their operation was for the most part unfelt by those against whom they were directed, were certainly not to blame for the delay, and many of them—those of Meath among the number—joined with their Roman Catholic fellow countrymen in petitioning for their repeal.

The anti-tithe movement was a blow struck directly at the Church of Ireland. The incomes of the clergy were for the most part derived from this source; when, therefore, payment was refused, it simply meant that the parsons were left without any maintenance. The institution was unknown in the ancient Irish Church, and was only introduced into the country by the Romanizers of the twelfth century. From the first it encountered considerable opposition, and it is said—though the assertion is not easy to verify—that it was never paid in those parts which lay beyond the English Pale. We have already seen how at various times the collection of these payments had become difficult, and sometimes impossible. In the beginning of the nineteenth century the opposition took a new form. The discontented no longer formed themselves into armed bands. They adopted more peaceable but not less efficacious methods. "Agitation"—so familiar a feature in modern Irish politics—took its rise about this time, and Daniel O'Connell may be said to have been the parent of that new force which he himself wielded so adroitly, and which has proved to be so powerful all through the century.

During the episcopate of Bishop O'Beirne the first rumblings of the coming storm were heard, and the subject had given rise to considerable discussion and ill-feeling. The bishop wrote a pamphlet dealing with the controversy, which he entitled, *A Letter from an Irish Dignitary to an English Clergyman on the Subject of Tithes in Ireland*. This pamphlet was considered to be such a powerful statement of the Church's case, that it was reprinted for more general circulation after the bishop's death. The great argument that he uses is that the title of the clergy to their tenth part rests precisely on the same foundation as the title of the

laity to the remaining nine parts. This proposition was vehemently denied by the opponents of tithes, who were always loud in their assertion that they were making no attack on the rights of property. The bishop urged that the two things held together, and he reminds landowners that rent as well as tithe was being attacked. "Is there a day," he asks, "in which we do not hear of insurrections and disturbances in some district or another in consequence of the exorbitant rents to which lands have risen?" He argues, too, that all transfers of property had been made subject to the payment of tithe, and that therefore it stood in the exact same position as did the payment of rent. Arguments such as these, however convincing they might be in themselves, could have little influence in swaying the passions of an excited mob, and it was by mob violence that the whole subject was discussed. The government seemed to be quite powerless. In 1832 it undertook the collection of the tithe, but the experiment proved a conspicuous failure. It is said that a sum of twelve thousand pounds was collected at an expense of twenty-seven thousand, and the attempt to levy the remainder was at length abandoned in despair. The methods adopted by the agitators, and the impotence of the government in dealing with them, may be understood from the following account which appeared in *Tate's Edinburgh Magazine* at the time:

> The system of the Catholic Association is the very reverse of violence. It is humble submission to law. It is the extremity of passive obedience, but dictated by the most determined spirit of resistance. The cattle are seized, impounded, brought to auction; but a plague seems upon them—no one will bid a shilling—no one will buy them. Tithe has been branded on them the moment they were seized. A Roman could not shun with greater horror anything devoted to the

infernal gods than a whole people the cattle branded with that single word. They are driven to Dublin under a guard of police, perhaps soldiers, and there shipped for Liverpool, but their evil fame has gone before, the obnoxious word is on them, and there, too, no buyer can be found. The consequence is that no cattle are seized, and tithes are therefore at an end.

Meath was not one of those districts in which the tithe agitators were particularly strong, yet there were many distressing scenes, and much suffering on the part of the clergy. The following is from the *Annual Register* for the year 1831 :—

The peasantry set up their own uncontrolled law of force. They directed themselves against the tithes of the Church, and the rents and property of the laity. Marching armed to the residence of the clergy, they compelled them to reduce the legal rate of the tithes, or to abandon it altogether. Vengeance was denounced by all manner of threatening notices, not only against the persons who should exact, but against the farmers who should pay it, and the menaces were carried into execution by murder, rapine, and arson. In the County Meath they marched from house to house, taking the labourers from their work and the horses from the plough, and so soon as the military had dispersed an assemblage at one point, a new one started up at another.

On the twenty-third of May in the same year (1831) there was a serious riot at Castlepollard in connection with some legal proceedings for the recovery of tithe. The following is the account, as given in the *Annual Register* :—

At the fair of Castlepollard, in the County Westmeath, the police had occasion to seize an offender. The mob attacked the police, the prisoner was rescued and carried off in triumph, renewed assaults were made, the chief constable was knocked to the ground, the police fired, and nine or ten persons were killed. At the Mullingar assizes, in the month of July following, bills of indictment for murder were presented to the Grand Jury against several of the police. The Grand Jury ignored the bills for murder, but in four cases found

bills for manslaughter. The prisoners were then put upon their trial, and were all acquitted. As the year advanced, the frightful mixture of lawless violence on the one hand, and of bloody repression on the other, lost little of its horrors. Payment of tithe was almost everywhere refused, and the usual system of threats and murder was again set in motion. The clergyman dared not ask—the willing occupier dared not pay. The law was powerless, and wherever the officers of the law interfered, open and bloody war was declared against them.

The reports of these proceedings published in the English Radical journals were very much what they would be at the present day. The mob was declared to be peaceful and orderly. It was the officers of the Crown who were the disturbers and aggressors. Here is the account, taken from *Tate's Edinburgh Journal*, of the occurrence last narrated :—

At Castlepollard a stone or two fell on the bayonets. There was no evidence to prove that the police were in danger; and what is conclusive, not a single policeman was produced with the slightest mark of injury on his person. But the excuse was given. They turned round and fired by threes into the middle of the crowd.

From the same source we take the following description of a scene at Kentstown, where cattle had been seized in consequence of non-payment of tithe :—

A sale was lately attempted in the County of Meath of the farm stocking of Mr. Christopher Morgan of Kentstown, and at the auction there appeared upwards of twenty thousand persons "to mark the bidders," but no bidder was to be found among the whole assemblage. A sale was again attempted a week or two afterwards, when there was the same assemblage, and the same result. No disturbance whatever took place on either occasion. The ministry, by the slowness of their measures in the abolition of tithes and the repeal of the house and window duties, are giving the people an opportunity of perfecting themselves in the art of passive resistance—an art

which is likely soon to become more effective in protecting the people from unjust burdens than a reformed Parliament."

It does not fall within the province of this history to discuss the question of tithes, whether they were just or unjust; nor have we to sit in judgment on the rulers of those days, and decide whether they acted wisely or with due regard to the rights of the people. We have only to note that the time was one of great suffering and privation to the clergy. Many of them were reduced to the direst poverty, and so great was the distress, that a sum of one million of money was granted from the Treasury, first as a loan to the tithe owners, and afterwards turned into a gift. Various Acts of Parliament were passed, beginning with the Tithe Composition Act in 1824, and ending with the Act passed in 1838, which substituted a rent-charge for the tithe formerly paid. This last Act brought the tithe agitation to an end. By it the payment was transferred from the occupier of the land to the owner, a reduction of twenty-five per cent. being made at the same time, as a reasonable allowance "for the greater facility and security of collection arising out of such transfer of liability from the occupiers to the owners of lands." This, with some slight modifications, continued to be the law as to the payment of tithe down to the time of disestablishment.

The rural deans' returns at this period reveal to us the fact that the diocese was fully organized and efficiently administered. For that reason they lend themselves less to quotation than do some others from which extracts have been already given. The returns for the year 1826 go into greater detail than most of the others, and the account of the Parish of Athlone may here be given, as a fair specimen of what they are

like. It speaks of progress and prosperity, but is not exceptional in this respect. Of most parishes it was possible to give an equally favourable account :

New church building, not yet fit for divine service. For the Communion there is a cup and chalice,[1] two plates, one patten, a knife and spoon, all silver. Two table cloths and two napkins, one Bible, and three Prayer Books (the Bible in good order, the Prayer Books in indifferent order) belong to the church. The churchyard is well enclosed. No dead body has been buried in church, or within twelve feet of walls, during last year. Divine service is regularly performed on the Lord's Day at noon and at seven o'clock in the afternoon, and on every festival and holiday throughout the year, and on every day in Passion Week. The minister and congregation are punctual to the appointed hour. The average number of congregation at present 300. The place used for divine service being too small to contain the entire number of Protestants in the parish, it is supposed when the church is finished the average number may amount to 600. The Sacrament is administered on the first Sunday of every month, and on Christmas Day, Easter Sunday, and Whitsunday. The number of communicants on Christmas Day last was 402 ; on Sundays from 40 to 60. The number of congregation increasing. The number of communicants doubled within the last four years. The congregation are generally furnished with Prayer Books. The number of families of the Established Church are increasing very much. The children are catechized every Sunday, from two to three o'clock, by the master, and on every Friday, by the incumbent, at the school. They are also catechized every Sunday at the Sunday School. The glebe-house and offices are in excellent repair. The present incumbent has just expended £600 in building a new range of offices. The glebe-house is furnished and occupied by incumbent. A terrier has been taken but not lodged. Cornelius Callery has just been appointed parish clerk ; he is well qualified. He is schoolmaster also, is well qualified, discharges his duty regularly, and attends church and the Sacrament constantly. The number of children attending him from 100 to 120 in summer ; in winter, from 70 to 90, some of whom pay from one penny to two-pence per week. The late William Handcock, Esq., left £20 per annum for the endowment of a Protestant

[1] Chalice in this case means what we would call a flagon.

school-master, and the late Arthur St. George left £5 and a house for ever to an English Protestant school-master, but neither of these endowments are available for the above purposes. There is a parochial school-house at present, and one is to be built this summer by the incumbent, chiefly at his own expense. There is a registry regularly kept in parchment, and a copy annually lodged. There is a preachers' book regularly kept. Baptism is administered in church on the Lord's Day after divine service. The sick are diligently visited. Matrimony is solemnized in church, and in canonical hours. The vestry accounts are regularly settled in Easter week. The number of Roman Catholic families supposed increasing. No Protestant dissenters in the parish.

The same items of information are given with regard to every parish, showing that they are answers to specific questions. This fact shows us that the rural deans' inspection was very thorough, and that the bishop kept himself well acquainted with the state of every parish in his diocese.

We have another source of information in the reports of several Commissions, Royal and Parliamentary, which were held during the episcopacy of Bishop Alexander. They show that the work begun by O'Beirne was carried on by him with vigour and success. We may choose the Report of the Ecclesiastical Commission, 1833, as sufficiently far on in his episcopate to show how the diocese fared under his rule. It gives us the following summary account of the duties performed in the churches by the several incumbents :

In the ninety-nine churches in this diocese, divine service is celebrated, in nine of them twice on all Sundays ; in forty-three, twice on Sundays in summer and once in winter ; and in forty-seven once on all Sundays during the year, exclusive of the celebration of service in each on the principal festivals. In six of these churches, viz. : Kells, Kilbride-Tullamore, Mullingar, Navan, Rathgraffe, and Trim, there is one service

performed on all Wednesdays and Fridays; and in Athlone Church a service on every Friday. And the Sacrament of the Holy Communion is celebrated monthly, and on the three great festivals during the year in seven, fourteen times in one, monthly in ten, twelve times in five, ten times in two, nine times in one, eight times in five, seven times in three, every second month in three, six times exclusive of festivals in one, six times in forty-nine, five times in one, four times in ten, and three times in one of these churches.

There were altogether one hundred and three incumbents, of whom eighty-nine were residents and fourteen non-resident. This shows that the evil of non-residence, which had been so rife at the beginning of the century, had practically ceased to exist, for eight of the fourteen parishes in which the incumbent was non-resident were districts small in extent, with no church, and in most cases no church population. Provision was made by payment to neighbouring clergymen for the performance of any occasional duty that might arise. The other parishes in which the incumbent was non-resident had a resident curate. Altogether there were thirty-eight curates employed in the diocese, which with the eighty-nine resident incumbents, made a clerical staff of one hundred and twenty-one. The church population of the diocese was at that time about two and a half times what it is at present, but even when we take this into account, it must be admitted that abundant provision was made, as far as the number of clergy was concerned, for the spiritual wants of the people.

The net incomes of the clergy amounted in the aggregate to £30,291, giving an average of nearly £300 a year. The incomes were, however, somewhat unevenly divided. Thirty-five of the parishes had less than £200 a year, and of these twenty-one had less than £100. On the other hand, there were eleven

parishes of over £600 a year, and of these one had £800, another £1,200, and another £1,800. The income of a curate was generally about £75 a year.

The amount that had been spent on the building of churches and glebe-houses, principally during the episcopate of Bishop O'Beirne, was very considerable. On the former about £80,000 had been expended, and on the latter about £73,000. Of these payments for glebes, £29,488 had been contributed by the clergy themselves, besides £24,658 which had been granted to them on loan, and which had to be repaid either by themselves or their successors.

The total population of the Diocese of Meath in 1834 was 104,059. Of these, 25,626 were church people, 77,562 were Roman Catholics, 672 were Presbyterians, and other dissenting bodies numbered 199. The Presbyterians had churches in Enniskeen, Laracor, and Mullingar. There were Quaker meeting houses in Moate and Tullamore. The other Dissenters nearly all attended church service, and most of them, especially the Methodists—both Primitive and Wesleyan—called themselves church people. The Primitive Methodist meeting-house in the parish of Clara was made use of by the incumbent at Christmas and Easter for the administration of the Holy Communion to remote parishioners. There were Wesleyan chapels in Kingscourt, Clara, Banagher, Mullingar, Athlone, Tullamore, Tyrrelspass, and Kilkenny West. The Primitive Methodists had chapels at Oldcastle, Athlone, Tullamore, and Clara. The Baptists had chapels at Clara, Banagher, Athlone, and Rahue (in the parish of Ardnurcher).

Among the Acts of Parliament which were passed affecting the church, the most important was the Church Temporalities Act, which became law in 1833.

By this Act the number of Sees in Ireland was reduced. There had been four archbishoprics since the time of the Synod of Kells. Henceforth there were but two. Ten bishoprics were suppressed, and the Sees united to adjoining dioceses. Meath, however, was not affected by this change, as it continued to retain its separate existence. The money that was saved by this reduction of the establishment was vested in the Board of Ecclesiastical Commissioners, who applied it to the building and repairing of churches, and to the providing of requisites for divine service, thus abolishing the assessments made by vestries for these purposes. Under this Act, the so-called sinecure parishes were abolished, and the emoluments of churches in which no service had been held for three years prior to the passing of the Act were handed over to the commissioners. The only parishes in the Diocese of Meath which were thus dealt with were Cruisetown, Ballygarth, Staholmac, Moymet, and Innismot, the combined incomes amounted to £475 a year, and out of this a payment of £83 a year was made to neighbouring clergy for the performance of the duty.

One other event is worthy of mention in connection with the period of which we are now treating, namely, the establishment of the Board of National Education. This took place in the year 1831. Like nearly all the measures passed at that time, the concession was made in response to agitation. Before the establishment of the National Board, the work of education was carried on by the Kildare Place Society, to which a yearly grant was given by the government. At first it was a rule of the society that the Scriptures should be read daily by all the children, and for many years no objection was made to this, as no comment was permitted, and all attempts at proselytism were

prohibited. After a time the system was attacked by the Roman Catholic clergy, and in 1826 their bishops put forth a manifesto, which claimed the right of directing the education of their own children. From that time an agitation was kept up, and in the end the National Board was established as a kind of compromise. It did not give all that the prelates had demanded, but it established the principle that the State was to concern itself only with the secular instruction of the children, leaving the clergymen of the different churches to make their own arrangements as to religious teaching. The expectation was that in the schools to be established, all creeds would meet together for the ordinary work, a separation being made only when the time for religious instruction arrived. As the system is now carried out, this intention of the founders has not been realized. For the most part our National Schools are altogether denominational, though safeguards exist to prevent their being used for proselytising purposes. In the beginning, however, something more than this was attempted, and an effort was made to unite all parties, in the hope that the ultimate results would be to break down much of the bigotry and sectarianism which unhappily has always prevailed in our land. The system did not commend itself to the clergy of the Church as a body. They were strong evangelicals, who felt that they had a duty to do something for the conversion of the Romanists by whom they were surrounded, and there was always the possibility that a Roman Catholic here and there might be attracted to their schools. Besides this, they regarded the reading of Scripture as the foundation on which all education should be based, and they objected to any school in which the Bible was a closed book for the greater part of the day. The controversy on the subject

was long and bitter, and has only died down within our own time. In Meath there was less excitement than in other parts of the country. Her bishops and some of her leading clergy were found among the supporters of the new system, but they were not able to carry with them the general body of the clergy, and it is only within a comparatively recent time that the National Board school has been accepted in the majority of our parishes.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Middle of the Nineteenth Century.

When the anti-tithe agitation came to an end, Meath entered upon a period of rest and quietness concerning which there is comparatively little to record. We must remember, however, that those times which provide the most abundant materials for the historian are by no means the times when the greatest progress is being made. If, therefore, we have little to say about the middle period of the nineteenth century, it is because work was being steadily carried on, and the Church went on her way, quietly fulfilling the great mission with which she had been entrusted by the Divine Master. Agitation did not come to an end, but it was diverted into a more purely political channel, and the Repeal of the Union became the popular cry. Some of O'Connell's greatest mass meetings were held within the bounds of the diocese, but their object did not concern itself in any way with the affairs of the Church, and therefore may be left out of view in our present enquiry.

Bishop Alexander died on the twenty-first of October, 1840, after a protracted illness, having presided over the See of Meath for a period of seventeen years. He was succeeded by Doctor Charles Dickenson, who was at that time a well known and popular Dublin clergyman. His father had come originally from Cumberland, but was settled in the County Cork, where

harles Dickenson was born in 1792, being the youngest ut one, of sixteen children. At the early age of fifteen ears he took a scholarship in Trinity College, and on ıe completion of his undergraduate course he began ɔ read for a fellowship. He soon gave up the idea, owever, for he became engaged to be married, and ıking Holy Orders, he was appointed to the curacy f Castleknock. Shortly afterwards he was appointed ɔ the assistant chaplaincy of the Magdalen Asylum, ɔublin, and when the Reverend James Dunne, in the ɔllowing year, resigned the chaplaincy of that ıstitution, Dickenson was elected as his successor. Ie became one of the intimate friends of Archbishop Vhately, and was appointed one of his chaplains. He ; said to have been " a man of extremely winning aspect nd address, and particularly accessible to the clergy n all matters of counsel or business."

While the See was still vacant Doctor Dickenson ɯrote to his sister a letter which reveals something f the character of the man. He discusses the ppointment to Meath, and says: " It is gossiped mong the Castle people that I am to be the person. do not myself think it, and I am perfectly calm about t. It is an office I should fear to wish for, and I m sure the matter will be controlled by the Highest Visdom. Many are putting forth political interest o secure the appointment, and I am putting forth ıothing at all. My course has been adopted without ny reference to my own advancement, and it shall ıot be changed either by being appointed or over-ɔoked." [1]

Doctor Dickenson's episcopate was very short. Ie was consecrated on the twenty-seventh of December, 840, and he died on the eleventh of July, 1842.

[1] Memoir of Bishop Dickinson.

The following obituary notice of him appeared in the *Annual Register* for 1843 :

July 11th, 1842, at his palace, Ardbraccan, in his fiftieth year, the Right Honourable and Right Reverend Charles Dickenson, D.D., Lord Bishop of Meath, and a Privy Councillor, Doctor Dickenson's appointment to the See of Meath was one of the latest made by the Whig Government in Ireland. It was the spontaneous and unsolicited act of Lords Fortescue and Morpeth, and was applauded by men of all parties. The Irish papers most opposed to him in politics congratulated the ministers on having made so good a selection. The letters subsequently collected, and published under the title of "The Bishop," were addressed to Doctor Dickenson at the time of his appointment. They were, as they professed to be, the production of a layman, but the materials were supplied by one of the highest authorities in the church. The Bishop of Meath was a zealous advocate of National Education, and every measure calculated to promote the genuine principles of both civil and religious freedom. He took a lively interest in the Oxford Tract controversy. He prepared, just before his death, a charge in which he traced the coincidence between the Tractarians and the Transcendentalists. It was to have been delivered on the very day he died.

The vacancy caused by the early demise of Bishop Dickenson was filled by the appointment of Edward Adderly Stopford, LL.D., Archdeacon of Armagh. The following account of him is given by the Reverend Doctor Brooke, in his *Recollections of the Irish Church*. He says :

The Rev. Edward Adderly Stopford, Archdeacon of Armagh, was of a noble family. His father was son to the Bishop of Cloyne, who had married his own first cousin, Anne, daughter of James Stopford, first Earl of Courtown. But Edward Stopford owed his preferment to no influence of position, nor to any interest whatsoever exerted on his behalf, but simply to his being known as a most learned ecclesiastical lawyer, and well suited to manage Church affairs in her Majesty's Privy Council ; and this estimate of him he afterwards fully justified, by his wise diligence in the breaking up

of many of the large parish unions still remaining in the Irish Church; to this he directed much of his attention as a Privy Councillor. He had before this proved himself a good and sound divine by his book *On the Sabbath*, a work too good to be so little known, yet valued and read by not a few. He was a pleasant and agreeable companion, fond of wit and literature, though not having time to cultivate the latter.

It was about this time that the Protestant Orphan Society was founded. The Westmeath Society was established in the year 1840, in the last year of the episcopate of Bishop Alexander. The Meath Society dates from 1844, and was established under the auspices of Bishop Stopford. Before this time the Dublin Society undertook the care of orphans sent up from the Diocese of Meath, and there was, besides, a small local society at Athboy. As in other similar societies through the country, the boarding-out system was adopted, and with the happiest results. Close on a thousand orphans have from time to time been cared for, and with few exceptions have been in every way a credit to the institution that befriended them. We have, in the present day, a multiplicity of organizations that were not thought of when the the Protestant Orphan Society was founded, but for economy of management and efficiency of administration it is still without a rival.

The resources of the Orphan Society were soon taxed to the utmost, for times of great destitution and suffering were at hand. It is true that Meath to a large extent escaped the horrors of famine, which were so terrible in other parts of the country, but she had her share in the pestilence by which so many children were left fatherless, and without any provision for their sustenance. Then, too, began that process of depopulation by emigration which has continued without intermission to the present day, and gives to

so many parishes the disheartening experience of a dwindling roll of church membership. It is to be hoped that the turning point will soon be reached, and that some new development, such as the establishment of industries other than those of pasturage and agriculture, may bring back the people to as fair and fruitful a spot as is to be found in all God's earth.

The only ecclesiastical event which we have to chronicle in this period is the suspension of the Deanery of Clonmacnoise, which was decreed by act of Council on the twentieth of May, 1847. A memorial was immediately presented by the bishop, praying that such suspension should be removed, and in answer to this petition the Council acceded to the request, restoring the dignity before the close of the same year. But the emoluments of the office were no longer paid to the dean. They were transferred to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and the deanery continued to be an unpaid office until the year 1882, when the synod, on the recommendation of the diocesan council, agreed to award a salary of £100 a year to the holder of that dignity.

Doctor Brooke, whose *Recollections* have been already quoted, gives some interesting details about several of the clergy who served under Bishop Stopford. The extract is somewhat long, but it will be interesting to the reader :

> At the bishop's house of Ardbraccan I twice met Miss Maria Edgeworth, my father's and my grandfather's friend, and here, too, I met his clergy, the most remarkable of whom was Edward A. Stopford, his second son, and the archdeacon of the diocese. He, indeed, was no common man ; possessing an intellect keen even to subtility, and capable of meeting and solving almost any intellectual difficulty; he yet exhibited in his manner and address the kindness and simplicity of a Christian gentleman, and was ever accessible for counsel,

support, or help, to every clergyman of his father's large diocese. Like the bishop, deeply read in black-letter lore and Church law, he was on these matters, an oracle to the Church, only, unlike that of Delphi, he never returned doubtful answers.

Inscius spargere voces ambiguas.

He had, above any man I ever met, the power of putting much matter into small space, and that clearly and intelligently; he was singularly happy in meeting and conquering infidelity in individual cases. He was a gentle, but most powerful controversialist, and his papers on Romish error in *The Catholic Layman*, as I have said before, are as masterly as they are incontrovertible.

Added to these qualities, he was a good mechanic, he could make anything out of wood or iron; had built steam carriages, and bound his own folios in a workmanlike fashion, which a London bookseller would not disown.

I knew him well for forty years, and knew him best and loved him most when I was permitted to minister to him as a dying man; then it was he realized the humbling convictions, yet exalting comforts, of that Gospel he had ever preached. He said, "The fifty-first Psalm is my *vade mecum*," and he died with a meek faith in a loving and redeeming Saviour.

In Meath there had been a body of excellent clergymen, some still living, among whom is my valued friend and fellow-student in old Trinity, Robert Hedges Dunne, one whose long consistency in a sound Christian course has been as steadfast as his own stalwart form and stout heart. There is also John F. Battersby, whose living is near Mullingar, a man who often taught my people from my Kingstown pulpit; Doctor Walshe, one whose physical and professional vigour seems to grow with his advance of years; and others whom I knew less, but equally esteemed.

Among those whom we all had to grieve for, was the late John Lever, Rector of Tullamore. He was brother to Charles Lever—the Lorrequer of light literature—and had much of the fraternal genius; short in stature, and ruddy in complexion like King David; he had quick sparkling eyes, and a protruding forehead actually knobbed with bumps of intellectuality. Like his brother, whom I also knew well, he was animated in manner and rapid in speech; he was as a

preacher thoughtfully evangelical, using no manuscript or note, and his discourses were solid, grave, and teaching, and such as one would not expect to hear from one so particularly lively in manner. Joseph Daly, Rector of Ferbane, was a remarkable minister; he has been greeted at the clerical meetings, when the clergy sat together over their Bibles, as the "Diocesan Concordance." A Latin Father has said, *Bonus textuarius, bonus theologus*, and this could well apply to Daly, for his extemporary sermons were full of Scripture, not only accurately quoted, but also the chapter and verse faithfully rendered, a wonderful act of a powerful abstract memory. One more I must speak of, a loved friend, the Reverend Charles Bayly, who died as Vicar of Trim; he was a singularly popular man with clergy as well as laity, and perhaps had more culture and reading than most evangelical ministers—the weak point in the body being more or less an inclination to ignore literature and despise art, forgetting that these are the good Lord's gifts to refine and adorn our poor fallen nature, and, like His common bestowments of music and of sunlight, to refresh and cheer us in our pilgrimage along the wastes of life.

Nor must I forget my dear friend and kinsman, the Reverend Coote Charles Mulloy, who for many years ministered in Meath. Esteemed a good clergyman, possessing a most accomplished mind, and a spirit much like the blessed Saint John's for gentleness and forethought; and yet this person, perhaps the meekest man in the diocese, when historically considered, presents a curious anomaly. For he is the representative of the O'Mulloy chieftaincy, one of the oldest, if not the oldest, Milesian families in Ireland. He is also Standard Bearer to the King of Ireland, by royal appointment of an ancestor in 1680. His ancient Celtic motto (which the good man has suppressed) breathes of rapine and slaughter, and he can look back along his line of twelve hundred years to a pedigree of fighting warriors. Yet this gentlest of men and of ministers has been all his life preaching nothing but the gospel of peace and of love, and exemplifying the same in his person, his parish, and his household. Mr. Mulloy married the eldest daughter of Doctor Stopford, Bishop of Meath; another daughter, a most intellectual and accomplished lady, is the wife of Richard Nugent, Esq., of London. Mrs. Nugent, when Miss Stopford, exerted herself during the Irish famine in 1845, and was eulogized for the same by name in an eloquent

speech made by Lord George Bentinck in the House of Commons.

The colloquial style of this extract does not detract from the vividness of the portraiture, and we may fairly gather from it that the clergy of Meath in the forties and fifties were men of culture and piety ; some of them good preachers and able scholars, and devoted to the work of the ministry which they had undertaken. It may be well to add that the Richard Nugent to whom Doctor Brooke refers, established the " Irish Church Sustentation Fund " in London, and acted as Honorary Secretary of that fund until his death. His place is now efficiently filled by his daughters, granddaughters of Bishop Stopford, and by their exertions a very substantial sum is contributed every year for the help of poor and struggling parishes in the West of Ireland.

Bishop Stopford died on the seventeenth of September, 1849. His successor was not appointed until September in the following year. The choice of the government this time fell on Thomas Stuart Townsend, Dean of Waterford. He survived his elevation for only twelve months, and shortly before his death had gone abroad for the benefit of his health. It may, therefore, be said of him that he had scarcely taken possession of his See before he was called away. The following obituary of him appeared in the *Annual Register* for 1852 :

September 16th, 1851. At Malaga, aged fifty-one, the Most Reverend and Right Honourable Thomas Stuart Townsend, D.D., Lord Bishop of Meath, a Privy Councillor of Ireland, a Commissioner of National Education, and an Ecclesiastical Commissioner for Ireland ; eldest son of Thomas Townsend, Esq., B.L., who was M.P., for Belturbet in the last Irish Parliament. Educated at Winchester and at T.C.D. ; Rector

of Burnchurch, County Kilkenny. In acknowledgment of his strenuous support of the National Education scheme, and generally of the policy of the Earl of Clarendon, he was promoted to the Deanery of Lismore in October, 1849; to that of Waterford in August, 1850; and in September following to the See of Meath. A Roman Catholic journal says: "The Bishop of Meath was the consistent, disinterested, and warm advocate of the National School system of education. His lordship's advocacy was not induced by an anxiety to create a self interest, or to establish a foundation for government patronage, but with a view to the amelioration of the rising classes of his fellow countrymen. He laboured from conviction, and his labours were attended with success. Prior to Doctor Townsend's promotion to the See of Meath, he discharged the duties of a pastor with a zeal, kindness, and consideration adequate to the responsible position he occupied. Kind and benevolent to the needy, courteous and affable to all who came within the sphere of his sacred duties, he departed this life after arriving at the height of his calling as a minister of God." The bishop married in 1828 the second daughter of Charles Spread, Esq., of Landsdowne Lodge, County Kerry, and has left a numerous family.

Bishop Townsend was succeeded in the following year by Doctor Joseph Henderson Singer. He was the son of James Singer, Esq., Deputy Commissary General to the Forces in Ireland, and was born in 1786. He had a brilliant career in Trinity College, where he took his M.A. degree in 1810, and in the same year he gained a fellowship. He was appointed Regius Professor of Divinity in 1850, became Archdeacon of Raphoe in 1851, and was consecrated to the See of Meath in 1852. Brooke says of him that he "was a man of universal and accurate information, possessing very polished manners, and a kind and winning address. He was a prodigious reader, not even despising the lighter literature of the day, which he swallowed, but probably did not care to digest; a steady preacher of evangelical truth, and a bold

upholder of Scriptural education." This last sentence implies that he supported the Church Education Society, in opposition to the National Board. In the appointments of Bishops Dickenson, Stopford, and Townsend, much weight was given to the fact that, in opposition to the great body of the clergy, they supported the National Board. If the Whig ministry had remained in power, doubtless the same considerations would have swayed them in appointing to the vacant See, but just at this juncture there was a change of ministry and it was under the auspices of the Conservatives that he was chosen to be the new bishop.

This controversy on the subject of education constituted, one might say, the one topic for discussion just at this time. On the one side was a small but influential party which was in favour of the government plan. On the other side was the great bulk alike of clergy and laity, who saw in the National Board system a concession to Roman Catholicism, and disliked it accordingly. In 1845 nine of the bishops issued a manifesto, which set forth the position taken by the supporters of the Church Education Society, which was a counter organization, intended to compete with the State schools. In it their lordships say:

> When the government first announced its determination that this system should supersede those to which the State had before given support, it was generally opposed by the clergy and laity of our Church. The grounds on which this opposition was made to rest were various. The undue prominence given to secular, to the depreciation of religious instruction—the disregard shown to the position and claims of the clergy of the Established Church, tending to throw the direction of national education into the hands of the priesthood of the Church of Rome—and other defects and evils, both of the system itself and of the machinery by which it was to be worked, were urged as grave objections against the proposed plan of education. While its opponents differed as to the importance which was

to be assigned to some of these objections, there was one upon the paramount importance of which all were agreed. The rule by which the Holy Scriptures were to be excluded from the schools during the hours of general instruction, was treated by all as so fundamentally objectionable, that while this should continue to be the principle of the system, they could not conscientiously connect their schools with it, even though all the other grounds of opposition were taken away.

In the former societies for the education of the poor, with which the clergy were connected, they had, in accommodation to the unhappy divisions of the country, consented to forbear from any attempt to teach the formularies of our Church to the children of dissenters, Protestant or Roman Catholic, who attended the schools of which they had the superintendence. But they did not judge themselves at liberty so to deal with the Word of God. There was in every school a Bible class, and in every school to read the Bible was a part of the daily business; and all the children in attendance, of whatever religious communion, took their places in this class, as soon as their proficiency enabled them to profit by the reading of the Holy Scriptures. But the distinction of the new system was, that it placed the Bible under the same rule with books of peculiar instruction in religion, and excluded it with them from the hours of general education. And, moreover, this great change was avowedly made as a concession to the unlawful authority by which the Church of Rome withholds the Holy Scriptures from its members.

Such was the state of the controversy when Doctor Singer became Bishop of Meath. Archdeacon Stopford was at this time, in many ways, the leading clergyman in the diocese, and was, like his father the bishop, a warm supporter of the National Board. He had established a National School in his own parish of Kells, but he had not been able to induce many of the clergy to follow his example. For the most part the parish schoolmasters combined with their duties those of parish clerk, and in this double capacity received salaries which seldom exceeded twenty pounds a year. The schools were small, and there was no scheme of efficient inspection. In 1856 he put forth a proposal

hich was intended to unite the discordant elements. e suggested that the National Board should take ver all these schools, allowing them to retain their enominational character, but only concerning itself ith the secular instruction which they provided. s a necessary corollary to this, he advocated that the hristian Brothers' schools should also be included.[2] or the time, his suggestions fell on deaf ears; but the end the lines which he sketched out were hose on which the education difficulty was solved.

Another controversy which attracted an amount f attention scarcely intelligible to us in the present ay was about the use of the black gown in the pulpit. s far as our records inform us, it would seem that he gown as a preaching vestment only appeared in leath in the early years of the nineteenth century, robably under the influence of Bishop O'Beirne, hough it is in the episcopate of his successor that we ave the first mention of it. The gown may have een in use before that time, but if so, no record has een preserved. During the time of the Tractarian ovement in England, the use of the surplice in the ulpit began to be the badge of a party. In Ireland, owever, it was never altogether regarded in that ay. In Meath an extraordinary use was introduced y Bishop Stopford, and continued in some places until period within living memory. He advised those ho wished to preach in a black gown to wear it under he surplice. When the time for the sermon came, he clergyman slipped off the outer vestment, without etiring to the vestry, making the change, as the bishop uts it, "unobservedly and speedily."

Shortly after Bishop Singer's appointment there ere efforts made in some parts of the diocese to

[2] MS. in Diocesan Registry.

reach the Roman Catholics, by means of Scripture readers and colporteurs. It does not appear whether this was done under episcopal sanction, nor, indeed, can we say if the bishop was consulted on the subject. The leading spirit seems to have been Archdeacon Stopford, who was a warm supporter of the Irish Church Missions, and himself a very able controversialist. In his own parish he introduced three readers, who went about selling Douay Bibles, and endeavouring to enter into religious conversation with the people. The immediate result was not very happy, as there was some rioting, and the whole place was for a time in the greatest ferment. Some of the ringleaders soon found themselves in prison, and this, it need hardly be said, did not tend to promote peace. Nevertheless it resulted in the establishment of the Meath Colportage Society, which continued a useful though not very ostentatious work until it was merged in a larger organization which embraces the whole of Ireland. The Roman Catholics, on their part, though they met Protestant controversialists with "stones and mud and shouts and filthy songs," did not hesitate to introduce preachers who attacked the doctrines of the Church, and argued against the principles of the Reformation. It tells something of the intrepidity and vigour of Archdeacon Stopford, to know that on that occasion he himself attended the services at which these missioners preached. He went in full canonicals, sat in the foremost seat, and made it known that he was ready to present the other side of the argument in his own church. It is said that a number of the leading Roman Catholics of the town accepted his invitation, though history does not relate that any of them went away convinced.

These controversial methods have grown out of

favour in our days, and perhaps we are right in thinking that they consisted too much in destructive criticism, and that those who spent their energies in the confuting of error were apt to present a mere negative creed, and in this made a great mistake. At the same time we should not forget that this controversy, and the desire that it showed of reaching the masses around, was a sign of life and vigour; and we do well to remember that it is true of churches as it is of individuals, that it is not those who make the fewest mistakes who do the most good.

Towards the close of the fifties there occurred in the north of Ireland a remarkable religious movement, known as the "Great Revival." It was attended with great excitement and many extravagances. As far as can be ascertained none of these extravagant developments reached the Diocese of Meath, but the wave of religious fervour was felt, and alike among clergy and laity there was an earnestness and devotion that spoke of a real work of God. Bishop Singer himself took the lead in the movement, and established a prayer-meeting at his Palace at Ardbraccan on Friday afternoons, and again at seven in the evening. Others of the clergy followed the lead that was thus given. Archdeacon Stopford had meetings in his own house, as well as special services in the church. The bishop's son, the Reverend Aemelius Singer, had a weekly prayer-meeting at Stackallen. Similar meetings were held by the Reverend Henry Brougham at Moynalty, the Reverend Frederick Trench at Newtown, and by many other clergymen in the Diocese of Meath.

Bishop Singer died on the nineteenth of July, 1866, in the eightieth year of his age, and in the fourteenth year of his episcopate. On the twentieth of the

October following, Samuel Butcher, D.D., Regius Professor of Divinity, T.C.D., was consecrated in the College Chapel to the vacant See. The sermon on that occasion was preached by the Reverend Doctor Salmon. The episcopate of the new bishop was destined to be a time of trial and difficulty. Now that it has passed into history we may thankfully acknowledge that it was also a time when devotion to the Church was conspicuously manifested. As for the bishop, he displayed statesmanlike qualities of which we might never have known if the occasion had not called them forth; and the people of whom he had the oversight gathered loyally around him, strengthening his hands, and all working together enthusiastically to ensure the welfare of the Church under the new conditions in which she was soon to be placed.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE EVE OF DISESTABLISHMENT.

THE census of 1861 was the first which gave accurate information as to the religious profession of the people of Ireland. An attempt had been made in 1834 to give the relative numbers of the different churches, but it was imperfectly carried out, while in the census of 1841, and again in that of 1851, no return was given of religious beliefs. When the results of the 1861 census were published, it appeared that out of a population of 5,798,967, there were 4,505,265 Roman Catholics, and therefore that this church claimed the great majority of the people. The Established Church numbered only 693,357, and the Presbyterians 523,291, the remainder being made up of various dissenting bodies and Jews. Almost immediately an agitation was set on foot for the Disestablishment of the Church, the argument naturally being that it embraced within its fold only a small section of the community. The movement, however, did not rouse much enthusiasm in Ireland, and in connection with it there were none of those stirring scenes and popular demonstrations which characterized the anti-tithe agitation, the demand for Catholic emancipation, or the movement for the repeal of the Union. The general opinion, therefore, was that the time was far distant when it would come within the sphere of practical politics. Those were the days of the Fenian organization, and the agitators who favoured more peaceful methods were regarded as half-hearted by the populace. Perhaps

that was one reason why the disendowment of the Church never became a great party cry in Ireland; and of course another reason was that while the Church establishment remained it furnished a most convenient lever when concessions for the Roman Catholics had to be extorted from the British Parliament.

The movement for the disendowment of the Church came almost entirely from England. The two parties in the State were at that time so evenly balanced, that neither had a working majority. Both parties were also very much disorganized, and this was especially the case with the Radicals, who were eagerly looking round for a policy which would unite all the heterogeneous elements of which that body was composed. The ebullition of disaffection in Ireland seemed to show that some remedial legislation was sorely needed, and this conclusion was brought home to the English people in an unexpected way by outrages perpetrated in their very midst. The Liberation Society saw in the crisis an opportunity for advancing their own principles, and at the same time furnishing a rallying cry for the Liberal party. No one knew better than Mr. Gladstone how to use an opportunity such as this, and he was not slow to avail himself of it. In the course of a debate, on the motion of Mr. J. F. Maguire to appoint a committee to consider the condition of Ireland, Mr. Gladstone announced that he was opposed to the continuance of the Church establishment in Ireland, and shortly afterwards he introduced a series of resolutions on the subject, when he obtained such majorities that the Conservative ministry was forced to resign.

How unexpected all this was, is shown from the fact that at the very time when these resolutions were being discussed, a Royal Commission was preparing its

report on the state of the Church, with the idea of suggesting legislation which would provide for a better disposal of its revenues. This Commission had been appointed in 1867, and was directed to "enquire and report as to the several archbishoprics, bishoprics, dignities and benefices, and as to the revenues belonging to the same; and also as to the several united and separate parishes and parochial districts in Ireland, and the number of members of the Established Church of England and Ireland inhabiting them; and also as to the property vested in the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for Ireland, and the administration of the same; and to enquire and report whether alterations and improvements should be made in the management, administration, and distribution of the revenues and property, or in the state and condition of the several offices, dignities, corporations, and benefices." [1]

The report which this Commission presented, though Mr. Gladstone's legislation had rendered it obsolete before it was issued, is interesting and instructive, both from the information which it gives, and from the recommendations which it makes. It contains a detailed account of each diocese, given parish by parish, and sets down the church population, extent, and income, together with the amount of the various outgoings, so that the net revenue in each case is accurately stated. The following summary, published in the appendix to the report, gives the statistics for Meath, as summarized by Archdeacon Stopford:

From a Map and Statement of the Diocese of Meath, carefully prepared by me from the Ordnance Survey, Stackpoole's Returns, and the Diocesan Registry, it appears—

(1) That the Diocese of Meath contains about 1,186,840 statute acres, equal to about 1,855 square miles.

[1] Report of the Established Church (Ireland) Commission, 1868.

(2) That 104 benefices are filled.

(3) That the net income of these benefices, omitting the lands of the archdeaconry, is £24,051 2s. 7d.

(4) That the number of the members of the Church is 16,289. Hence it follows that—

(*a*) The average area of a benefice is eighteen square miles.

(*b*) The average net income is about £231 5s.

(*c*) The average church population is over 156.

Considering that the average of a rural parish in England is five square miles; the average population 387; and of income, £285; and considering the great increase of labour and expense incurred in visiting a congregation scattered over a district three and a half times as large, the comparison is not unfavourable.

But averages tend to conceal evils, and leave opens for attack; and the Diocese of Meath does greatly need revision of its arrangement.

He goes on to say that the area of benefices in Meath varies from two and a half to one hundred and twenty-eight square miles, adding, "Our present system is vicious alike in the size and boundaries of parishes; and most of what are called the abuses in the Church arise from defect in the remedy which the law has provided." The Church population, he says, varies from five in one parish to seven hundred and eight in another. Six benefices have less than twenty church members; fourteen others have less than fifty. The incomes of the benefices vary from £19 10s. to £996 17s. 9d. Fifteen are under £100. He then makes various proposals for re-arrangement, suggesting that the number of benefices should be reduced to eighty-one, and providing for them incomes that vary from £200 to £576.

The commissioners recommended some very drastic changes, and amongst their proposals was the suppression of Meath as a distinct See. They suggested that it should be united to Dublin, and that Dublin itself

should no longer be an archbishopric—at least, a majority of the Commission thought so—but, in recognition of its former position, and because the capital of the country was situated within its bounds, they proposed that it should have precedence over every other bishopric in Ireland. However, as we have seen, before the report was presented to Parliament, it had been decreed that an appeal must be made to the electorate to decide whether the connection between Church and State in Ireland was any longer to be preserved.

On the twenty-third of March, 1868, Mr. Gladstone introduced his resolutions in favour of disendowment, and the debate on these resolutions began a week later. The first of them was carried on the first of May, and four days later Mr. Disraeli announced the intention of the government to resign and appeal to the country. The dissolution did not, however, take place until the eleventh of November following. Every exertion was made to avert the disaster, but in vain. On the second of December Mr. Gladstone was entrusted with the seals of office, and had at his back a majority of the House of Commons, pledged to assist him in the work of destruction. He lost no time in introducing his Bill. It was presented to the House on the first of March, 1869.

There was a rumour at the time that Archdeacon Stopford helped Mr. Gladstone in the drafting of the Bill, and considerable indignation was expressed at what was considered an act of perfidy on the part of the Archdeacon of Meath. The truth, however, was merely that the archdeacon made some suggestions to Mr. Gladstone, which that statesman discussed with him, and in some measure adopted, the object

being to make the Bill as little detrimental as possible to the interests of the Church. The following letter, addressed by the archdeacon to the *Daily Express*, explains the part he took in this matter :

TO THE EDITOR OF THE *Daily Express*.

SIR,—I have seen in your paper of this date that a rumour has been in circulation that the government had made overtures to me to assist them in the preparation of a Bill for the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of Ireland.

I beg to say in reply, that the government has not made any overtures to me on this or on any other subject.

Opposed on principle, as I am, to disestablishment, I yet see that the battle will be fought on a Bill. I desire to see the issue taken on intelligible grounds. I think a party fight on mere mistakes would not serve the interests of the Church. Knowing that other parties are working hard to have the Bill drawn as hostile as possible to the future efficiency of the Church, and knowing too that nothing is being done on our side to counteract them, I have made representations to the government that they should abstain from needless injury to the Church. Of the result, I, of course, know nothing. But I have the satisfaction of knowing that wise and able men, who do not see their way to join with me at present, are yet disposed to hope that even from such humble efforts some good may arise in the future.

I believe that Mr. Gladstone is sincerely desirous to do the Church as little injury, and to leave it as efficient for spiritual work, as political circumstances will permit. Others are striving for the extinction of a Reformed Church. I think our duty is to leave no means unused to secure the efficiency of the Church in the future ; and to this I strictly confine myself.—Your obedient servant,

EDWARD A. STOPFORD

Archdeacon of Meath.

The Bill was still under discussion in Parliament when the Easter vestries met, and at most of them

resolutions were passed protesting against disestablishment. By direction of the bishop, delegates were elected at these meetings to a diocesan conference which he had summoned. This conference met at Navan on Wednesday, the thirty-first of March, 1869. The large attendance, both of clergy and laity, showed how great was the interest that the question had excited. It is interesting to note that amongst the clergy present there were two at least who had openly declared themselves as being in favour of Mr. Gladstone's Bill. One was the Reverend Frederick Trench, Rector of Newtown, who had published a pamphlet on the subject. A short time previously he had been present at the annual meeting of the Kells Young Men's Christian Association, and was met with such tokens of hostility from the people assembled, that he had to quit the room.[2] The other was the Reverend Doctor Brady, Vicar of Donaghpatrick, who shortly afterwards, having commuted and compounded, seceded to the Church of Rome, and ended his days as one of the Pope's chamberlains at the Vatican.

The bishop presided at the meeting, and the first resolution was proposed by Lord Dunsany, and seconded by Archdeacon Stopford, as follows:

That this meeting protests against the measure for the disestablishment and disendowment of the Irish branch of the United Church now before Parliament, as destroying the religious character of the State, and alienating from the direct service of God property solemnly devoted to Him; and also as an enormous injustice to the members of the Irish branch of the Reformed Church, from which there will be thus withdrawn that provision for the ministry of the pure Word of God, and of His Sacraments, which, by compacts that ought to be most binding, had been assured to them.

[2] Report of Meeting in the *Meath Herald*.

This was followed by another resolution, proposed by Major Dalton, and seconded by the Reverend C. J. Bayly, Vicar of Trim :

That this meeting further protests against the government measure, as containing, apart from the primary wrong, a multitude of secondary injustices, and as calculated to oppose great hindrance to the future working of the Irish Church.[3]

It was scarcely to be expected that resolutions like these would influence in any way the minds of the senators who were debating the subject at Westminster. Two months later the Bill had passed its third reading by an overwhelming majority. There was still a hope that the House of Lords would come to the rescue and throw out the Bill. But this hope also proved to be vain. On the twelfth of July—a day which suggested very different memories—the peers read the Bill a third time, and shortly afterwards it received the royal assent, and became the law of the land.

The time was one of great anxiety and of no little foreboding. It was, however, a good omen that in the midst of all their troubles the churchmen of Meath, so far from being disheartened as to the future, were actually inaugurating a new organization, which was to have for its object the improvement of church music. It was in the week before the Church Bill was introduced that the first annual meeting was held of the Meath Church Choral Association. The first Choral Festival had been held in Athboy in December, 1867. After it, the Choral Association was formed, and the first festival under its auspices was held at Kells, when the church was re-opened after renovation, on the fifth of August, 1868. The following extract from the report will be read with interest :

At the end of the first year since the Meath Church Choral

[3] Report of Meeting in the *Meath Herald*.

Association assumed its present form, the committee have much reason to congratulate the members and friends of the association on the success which has attended it. Already the example set by Meath has led to the formation of a similar association in Westmeath, and from enquiries which have been addressed to the secretaries as to the rules and working of our association, we have reason to believe that like movements are in contemplation elsewhere. At the Kells Festival all the eleven choirs in union took part, and we cannot do better in speaking of the result than by quoting the words of the Rev. G. W. Torrance, who most kindly assisted us by presiding at the organ. Writing of the festival afterwards, he says, "I think that all engaged in it have very good reason to be satisfied with the early fruit of an association which will yet, I hope, do great things for the church music of the diocese." We cannot leave this subject without expressing our thanks to the Reverend Alfred T. Harvey, for his unwearied exertions in superintending the training of the several choirs for the festival.[4]

As noted in this report, the Westmeath Church Choral Union dates from practically the same time. It was established on the same lines as that in Meath, and held its first festival in Mullingar on Tuesday, the fifteenth of December. The Westmeath choirs were trained by the Reverend Doctor Reichel, who afterwards became bishop of the diocese, and the Reverend R. T. Bevan, Rector of Street, in the Diocese of Ardagh. What progress has been made in the meantime may be judged from the fact, that at this festival there was no anthem, and that the whole service was rendered in unison.

Thus there was no tone of faltering or of discouragement. The wealth of the Church might be taken away, but its welfare was assured, when its children were prepared to go forth with singing to undertake the serious task which lay before them.

[4] Report of the Meath Church Choral Association.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Reconstruction.

When disestablishment and disendowment had become accomplished facts, not a moment's time was lost in commencing the work of reconstruction. The Irish Church Act was passed in July, 1869, but did not come into operation until the first day of the year 1871. The interval was employed in drawing up a constitution for the Church, in making arrangements for general and diocesan synods, in appointing members of the Representative Church Body, and in formulating schemes for the collection of church funds. The whole work of preparation was practically completed before the Church Act came into force.

The Irish House of Convocation had not been called together since the days of Queen Anne, nor could it be assembled without the royal mandate. This restriction being taken away by the Church Act, it was determined that Convocation should be called once more into existence. Accordingly, it met in Saint Patrick's Cathedral, in September, 1869. Among the resolutions which were passed at this meeting, was one that declared "that under the present circumstances of the Church of Ireland, the co-operation of the faithful laity had become more than ever desirable," and another arranged for the holding of a "convention," in which both laity and clergy would meet together. In anticipation of these resolutions, a meeting of the laity had been already held, to make

suggestions and arrangements for the future management of the Church. This meeting drew up a requisition to the two archbishops, asking that a conference of representative laymen should be summoned for the fifth of October following. Accordingly, a circular was issued which directed each incumbent to summon a meeting of his parishioners, admitting all adult members of the Church, either resident or holding property in the parish. These were to elect as many lay delegates as there were clergy in the parish, and to forward the names without delay to the bishop. The course thus indicated was adopted in Meath as in all other dioceses, and the bishop assembled the delegates—Meath and Westmeath meeting separately—and from them the members of the lay conference were chosen. When this conference met, it agreed to the suggestion of Convocation, that a general convention of clergy and laity should be assembled.

The next move, therefore, was to elect representatives to this "General Convention," which was to transact business such as is now ordinarily transacted by the General Synod, besides drawing up a code of laws by which the Church was to be governed under its altered circumstances. Once more a meeting of the parishioners was held in every parish to appoint delegates, but on this occasion it was left optional to elect two laymen for every clergyman, a privilege which was embraced in nearly every instance. On the result of these elections the Diocesan Synod of Meath met for the first time—though this meeting is not ordinarily counted among the number of Meath synods. The delegates from the eastern portion of the diocese met at Navan on Monday the twenty-second of November, 1869, and those from the western portion, at Mullingar, on the following Wednesday.

The bishop presided at both meetings, and in his opening speech pointed out that the object which brought them together was to take steps for the future organization of the Church. He was sure that they had all assembled under a deep sense of the obligation imposed upon them, and he trusted that the harmony and unity which hitherto had pervaded their councils, would not be broken. He went on to remind the delegates of a resolution which had been passed by Convocation, and had been quoted in a letter issued by the two archbishops, "that they were now called upon not to originate a constitution for a new communion, but to repair a sudden breach in one of the most ancient churches in Christendom." The bishop explained what he thought was the spirit in which they should approach the work of reconstruction by referring to the "very striking passage" in the Preface to the Prayer Book, which spoke of "Ceremonies, why some be abolished and some be retained." The reference, he said, was to certain persons who were anxious to discard everything because it was old, and to introduce novelties simply because they were novelties; and he went on to quote, "in such case they ought to have reverence to them for their antiquity, if they will declare themselves to be more studious of unity and concord than of innovations and new-fangleness, which (as much as may be with true setting forth of Christ's religion) is always to be eschewed."

The remainder of the bishop's speech was taken up with matters of business. He explained the mode of voting, the qualification of voters, and other matters, connected with the election of delegates; and he proceeded to say that he thought it advisable that they should not enter into a discussion on any subject that

might lead to a debate. Before concluding he spoke of a resolution which had been arrived at by the prelates, that they would sit and vote as a separate body or order. This resolution had given rise to a good deal of comment, because it constituted the bench of bishops a kind of separate house, able to control the decisions of the synod in the same way as the House of Lords can exert a restraining influence on the House of Commons. Bishop Butcher gave the reasons why they had come to this decision, and told the synod that the real motive in their hearts was to guard the interests of the Church. It will be gathered from this, as from the whole tone of the address, that there were some misgivings as to how far a popularly elected body could be trusted with the control of Church affairs. If his lordship had survived to the present day, he would see that his fears were groundless. He would, no doubt, be both surprised and gratified to find that this episcopal veto, which seemed then so necessary, has been little more than a dead letter.

In accordance with the bishop's suggestion, there was practically no debate at these meetings. A little dissatisfaction was expressed at the synod being called together in two sections, but the objections were overruled, and when the necessary elections were completed, the sittings came to an end. It may be well here to record the names of those who represented Meath at the General Convention, which met shortly afterwards to draw up the constitution of the Church of Ireland. The clerical representatives were :—J. F. Battersby, Doctor Joseph Bell, E. F. Berry, Dean Brownlow, C. Burton, T. G. Caulfield, Doctor Dundas, R. Radcliff, Doctor Reichel, C. Russell, H. A. Sadleir, and Archdeacon Stopford. The lay representatives were : J. P. Armstrong, G. A. Rochford Boyd, T. P.

Cairnes, Lord Castlemaine, Richard Chaloner, Major G. T. Dalton, Lord Dunsany, Doctor Ferguson, Robert Fowler, Samuel Garnett, Thomas Gerrard, J. L. Naper, J. J. Nugent, R. Nugent, H. M. Pilkington, LL.D., W. Barlow Smythe, P. H. Thompson, J. Tisdall, R. C. Wade, and H. H. Woods. Of this long list only one—Mr. Thomas Gerrard—now remains to us.

The " General Convention of the Church of Ireland," of which these gentlemen were members, sat for forty-one days, from the fifteenth of February to the second of April, 1870. It resumed its sittings on the eighteenth of October following, when it sat for sixteen days more, to the fourth of November. The account of the important business which it transacted belongs to the general history of the Church. It may suffice here to note that the delegates from Meath took a leading part in the deliberations, and that some of the most important points in the legislation of the Church were due to their initiative. For example, the third clause of the " Preamble and Declaration," which is prefixed to the Constitution of the Church of Ireland, was not in the original draft, but was proposed by Archdeacon Stopford. It sets forth that, " The Church of Ireland will maintain communion with the sister Church of England, and with all other Christian churches agreeing in the principles of this declaration ; and will set forward, as far as in it lieth, quietness, peace, and love, among all Christian people." It will be seen that this is not the least important of the articles which are laid down as principles in that preamble.

The Reverend Doctor Reichel was, as many will remember, a skilful debater and ready speaker, and as may well be imagined, he took a prominent part in all the discussions. In the matter of the system of nomination to vacant parishes, it may be said that

the new method was altogether shaped by him. The number of the diocesan representatives, and the position of the bishop as president of the board, with an ordinary and casting vote, are due to the amendments which he proposed, and the acceptance of which he urged on the convention with his extraordinary vigour. In the original draft, it was proposed that the Board of Nomination should in each case consist of three nominators elected by the parishioners, together with three clergymen and three laymen elected by the synod, the bishop seemingly being excluded. This board was to nominate three clergymen to the bishop, and from these three the diocesan was to make his choice. Thus it will be seen that at each board the diocese would be represented by six members, and the parish by three. On the other hand, there would be six lay votes to three clerical. The present system, as proposed by Doctor Reichel and accepted by the convention, makes the board to consist of four laymen, three of whom represent the parish, and two clergymen, who with the bishop and the fourth layman represent the diocese. It is said that when Doctor Reichel became bishop, and had experience of the working of these boards, he was led to doubt whether the present system adequately protects the interests of the diocese. Dean Craig, writing to the bishop's son, says :

> He told me candidly that, when the matter was under consideration after the disestablishment of the Church, it was proposed that the diocese should be more represented, and the parish less. He at that time went in for the system adopted and still in force, but had quite changed his mind after some years of experience, though he felt the difficulty of making a change now. On one remarkable occasion, when the parochial nominators all voted for a certain candidate, and were supported by the lay diocesan nominator, he gave his vote with the clerical nominators, and immediately after, his

casting vote. He was convinced that he was acting rightly, and without doubt he was. I was a member of the board on that occasion.[1]

Among the resolutions passed at the convention was one, proposed by Master Brooke, as follows:

That a committee shall be appointed to consider whether, without making any such alterations in the Liturgy or formularies of our Church as would involve or imply any change in her doctrines, any measures can be suggested calculated to check the introduction and spread of novel doctrines and practices, opposed to the principles of our Reformed Church, and to report to the General Synod of 1871.

Immediately afterwards, Doctor Lee, Archdeacon of Dublin, resigned his membership of the convention, on the grounds that by this resolution the synod was to be asked to alter the doctrines of the Church of Ireland. Under ordinary circumstances, a member's resignation simply means that another takes his place, but in this case it was felt that by letting the matter pass over, there was a tacit acknowledgment of the truth of the charge made by the archdeacon. There was a small party in the convention which rejoiced in the secession of any high churchman, and one of them moved that this resignation be simply accepted. Once more, however, the convention accepted the leadership of Doctor Reichel, and by a vote of two hundred to twelve agreed to his resolution:

That in accepting the resignation of the Venerable William Lee, D.D., Archdeacon of Dublin, the Convention distinctly repudiates the allegation contained in his letter to the Lord Primate, viz.: that the Convention had adopted a resolution. of which the object is to alter or modify the doctrines of the Church, as defined in the Book of Common Prayer."[2]

[1] Memoir of Bishop Reichel prefixed to *Sermons by Charles Parsons Reichel*, published after the Bishop's death.

[2] *Journal of the General Convention of the Church of Ireland.*

The part which Doctor Reichel took in shaping the regulations for the appointment of clergymen to vacant cures may be said to have been paralleled by Doctor Pilkington in framing that chapter of the statutes which deals with ecclesiastical tribunals. Doctor Pilkington held for some years the office of Chancellor to the Diocese of Meath, and was one of the ablest ecclesiastical lawyers of his time. There is scarcely a clause in the chapter referred to which was not amended at his suggestion, and several of the rules which were introduced were proposed by him.

It remains to add that the mode of electing to the Primacy, after much debate and many abortive proposals, was settled by the acceptance of a resolution proposed by one of the Meath representatives. It was Mr. Barlow Smythe whose suggestion was in the end adopted, and which now, with some modification, forms part of the law of the Church.

At the ensuing Easter vestries, lists of registered vestrymen were formed, and in each parish a select vestry was elected, as well as parochial nominators and diocesan synodsmen. Thus the parochial machinery was set at work which has continued in operation until the present day.

The first meeting of the Diocesan Synod, formed in accordance with the rules laid down by the Irish Church Convention, was held on the twenty-eighth of July, 1870. The members assembled for Divine Service and the celebration of the Holy Communion in the chapel of the Lying-in-Hospital, Dublin, and afterwards met for the transaction of business in the Pillar Room of the Rotunda. The meeting lasted for two days, and as the mandate from the Primate for the election of members of the General Synod had not yet been received, it was adjourned for that purpose, and

met again later in the year in two parts—the Meath portion in Navan, and the Westmeath portion in Mullingar. The resolutions adopted at this synod were all of a business-like character; they defined the duties of the Diocesan Council, as well as the number of members, and the mode of their election. They directed the council to carry into effect the resolutions with regard to finance which had been adopted by the General Convention, and for that purpose to promote parochial organization for the collection of subscriptions and donations to the sustentation fund; they also asked the council to report on the subject of the re-arrangement of benefices, and to prepare a list of churches, glebe-houses, and other church property that was to be claimed from the government. They recommended the clergy to commute, so as to gain the financial advantages which were thereby secured. These resolutions, together with the election of the Diocesan Council and of the Board of Patronage for the diocese, seem to have fully occupied their time.

The Diocesan Council met for the first time at 8 Dawson Street, Dublin, on Wednesday, the twenty-fourth of August, 1870, and set at once to work, meeting regularly every month, until after the first arrangements were completed, it was not deemed necessary for them to meet so often.

The financial arrangements of the diocese formed naturally one of the first subjects to be considered by the Diocesan Council and the Synod. It does not fall within the scope of this present work to give an exposition of Irish Church finance, but so many wild assertions have lately been made on this subject that it may be well here to explain the exact state of the case, taking the finances of the Diocese of Meath as our example.

The first fact that we have to keep in mind is that the Irish Church Act provided for the payment of the existing clergy as long as they lived, and gave to the Church the right of demanding their services in return for this payment. In other words, the Act did not turn the clergy all adrift. It was felt that to do so would be intolerably unjust. What the Act provided was that, while the existing clergy lived, things were to go on as before, but as each clergyman died, there would be no State provision for hiss uccessor. The position of the Diocese of Meath then was that it had one hundred and thirteen clergymen whose services would be paid for by the government as long as they lived, but when they died provision had to be made for their successors. Such clergymen were henceforth known as "annuitants." It will be easily understood that this arrangement made it possible for something to be done in the way of re-endowment. In any individual parish the parishioners could at once begin to subscribe for the support of the ministry, and their subscriptions could be allowed to accumulate as long as their clergyman lived. On his death, the amount thus saved would form an endowment to help towards the payment of his successor.

Another alternative was offered to the church and the clergy. It was proposed that if the clergy consented, the capitalized value of their annuities would be handed over to the Church, and in that case the Church would have to pay the annuities instead of the government. This was not really an alternative, but was simply another and a more economical way of carrying out the same business. To pay an annuity year by year, or to pay the ascertained value of the annuity in one sum, is financially an equivalent transaction. This proposal of the government was accepted. The

clergy of Meath, with two or three exceptions, agreed to it, and as a result, the diocese received a sum of £367,436 14s. 8d., and undertook to pay annuities amounting to close on £30,000 a year. The clergy who agreed to this arrangement were said to have "commuted," and the money thus given to the diocese was called "commutation capital."

It would seem at first sight that this was a large sum of money for one diocese to receive under an Act of disendowment, but when we look into the matter, we will see that the government made an exceedingly good bargain by the transaction. Every clergyman in the diocese was entitled to a government annuity, and that being so, it would seem that the sum awarded should be the amount which would enable the diocese to purchase such an annuity in each case. But this was by no means possible. It would have taken about £55,000 more to do so. Or to put it in another way: if the diocese had invested its capital in Three per cent. Consuls, and had been able to purchase them at par—a thing that was not possible at the time—and if Mr. Goschen had not brought in his Bill for reducing the interest on Consuls: then when the whole transaction would have been completed, the diocese would have been a loser by £55,000. This sum, therefore, represents the profit which the government made by its transactions with the Diocese of Meath. Instead of making a concession to the Church, it was really saving its own pocket.

The value of the annuities was calculated at three and a half per cent. This means that if the sum mentioned had been invested at that rate of interest, the net result would be neither gain nor loss. When the last annuitant had been paid off, nothing would be left. The Representative Church Body, however,

undertook business, somewhat similar to that which is conducted by an insurance company, and by their success in that enterprise they were able to pay the diocese four per cent. on the amount of its capital. Three and a half per cent, as we have seen, would have enabled the diocese exactly to pay its way in dealing with the annuitants. Four per cent. gave a clear profit of one half, and this half per cent. profit would yield £1,837 a year. This amount, put by every year, and allowed to accumulate at compound interest, would this year (1907) come almost exactly to £150,000. The amount that has been saved out of the original capital is more than this. It amounts to £176,884. The difference is accounted for by the fact that the staff of clergy was at once cut down, and that several were content to take part of the value of their annuities on being released from the obligation of giving their life service. We have thus accounted for a large part of the diocesan capital. The remainder has been chiefly derived from the accumulation of subscriptions paid for sustentation during the lives of the annuitant clergy, but not required for the support of the ministry until after their decease. The actual financial operations were much more complicated than the case as here presented, but the final result was bound to work out very much in the same way.

Up to this we have dealt only with the question of the payment of the annuitants. Another question called for immediate settlement, namely, how to furnish stipends for the various parishes, according as they became vacant. We have shown above how this could have been done in any one individual parish. But the uncertainty of life would have rendered the independent action of parishes most precarious and unsatisfactory. If the clergyman of the parish lived

long, a good deal could be done to provide for his successor, but if he lived only for a short time, no such provision could be made. To meet this difficulty, the Financial Scheme was framed. The principle on which this was founded was that of an insurance company, namely, that while each individual case was uncertain, the inclusion of a large number of cases reduced this uncertainty to a minimum. Accordingly, every parish was required to subscribe whether it had an annuitant clergyman or not, and the diocese undertook to pay the stipend of the new incumbent whenever it became necessary to appoint one. In this way it was calculated that in the early years, when few clergymen would have to be paid, an amount of capital could be secured, the interest on which would be available when the full charge of sustentation would have to be borne. It was expected that a fund could thus be formed sufficient to pay thirty-five per cent. of the incomes of all the clergy in Meath, and on this basis the financial scheme was founded. Subsequent years showed the correctness of these calculations. Not only has the scheme been able to pay all the demands that were made upon it, but since the year 1896 it has been found possible to pay bonuses of six and four per cent. to those clergy who have been ten years in Orders, and to carry over every year a balance amounting to about one thousand pounds.

The Financial Scheme was adopted at the synod which was assembled on the fifteenth of November, 1871. Earlier in the year, the Reverend Robert Gregg, who afterwards became successively Bishop of Ossory, Bishop of Cork, and Archbishop of Armagh, attended a meeting of the Diocesan Council, and explained the financial proposals of the Representative Church Body. At that meeting a sub-committee was appointed,

consisting of Archdeacon Stopford, the Reverend Garrett Nugent, afterwards Archdeacon of Meath, Mr. W. Barlow Smythe, The Honourable R. Handcock, Mr. Robert Fowler, Mr. G. A. Rochfort Boyd, and Mr. Thomas P. Cairnes. These drew up a draft of the scheme, which was presented to the council, and then submitted to the synod. It was afterwards submitted to an actuary, and then to the Representative Church Body. At the following synod (July 9th, 1872), it was again brought up, and with some amendments was brought into the shape which it has since retained.

A large number of the clergy elected to "compound," that is to say, they gave up their annuities, and received in return a lump sum, amounting to somewhat more than half the value, being relieved at the same time from the obligation of giving their life service. Many of them continued to work in the diocese, but became stipendiary clergy, receiving the ordinary stipend of the parish, with a certain deduction, on account of the capital sum which they had received. In every such case the parish became vacant, and this fact very considerably facilitated the work of re-arrangement of benefices. This project was therefore taken in hand at once. At the time of disendowment the number of benefices was one hundred and five. This number was immediately reduced to seventy-seven. A still further reduction took place afterwards, so that the number of parishes now amounts to seventy. This consolidation of parishes was in every way good for the diocese. It was economical, for it enabled the work to be done with a smaller staff. But it was also good in other ways, for some of the parishes were absurdly small, and indeed it was only difficulties about patronage and the like that had prevented it from being carried out at an earlier period.

The net result of all was that the diocese entered on its new circumstances with a reduced income and a reduced staff. But the reduction in income was not so much as to render the average stipend of a clergyman much less than it had been before; nor was the reduction in staff great enough to interfere seriously with the efficient working of the diocese. A few churches were closed, where the small numbers attending rendered this course advisable, but in every case there was another church within a reasonable distance, so that none of the parishioners were left without the means of grace. On the whole, therefore, it may be said that the spiritual wants of the people are as well attended to as in the old times, and that the blow of disestablishment has not in any way impaired the efficiency of the work in the diocese.

CHAPTER XL.

The First Episcopal Election.

In August, 1876, the Church of Ireland, and especially the Diocese of Meath, was startled by the announcement of the unexpected death of Bishop Butcher. He had been suffering from fever, but there was every reason to hope that his natural strength would enable him to battle with the illness, when, in a moment of delirium, he inflicted injuries on himself from which he succumbed. He was a man whose ability and scholarship could badly be spared at such a time, for the controversy as to the revision of the Prayer Book was then at its height, and the Church needed wise and able leaders for the difficult work that she had undertaken. The Diocesan Report for 1875, which was presented to the synod on the seventeenth of October, 1876, has the following notice of the deceased prelate :

It is our most painful duty this year to record an event that has cast a deep gloom over the entire Church, and has specially affected the Diocese of Meath. We refer to the death of our beloved and revered bishop, who was so suddenly and unexpectedly taken from amongst us, in the midst of his labours, and in the prime of his usefulness. His loss, while most seriously affecting the whole Church, will be specially felt in this diocese, over which he presided in the trying period since disestablishment, with such marked ability and such unceasing care ; and in which his unvarying kindness, gentleness, and consideration, have lastingly endeared him to all. In the General Synod, while ably and firmly maintaining his own views, his influence was constantly exercised in the

interests of moderation and of peace, and he was frequently instrumental in effecting amicable and satisfactory solutions of difficulties that threatened to be most serious. In our diocesan synod, in the Representative Body, in our diocesan council, and in other boards of which he was a member, his untiring assiduity, his cheerful and willing devotion, his forbearance and gentleness towards all, made him conspicuous even among devoted men.

We have indeed sustained a serious, an irreparable loss, in this brave, this noble life, too quickly past; and it remains for us not merely to mourn his death, but to lay to heart the lesson that his unceasing devotion to his Master's cause, and his constant attachment to the Church that he adorned, so plainly teach.

It would ill become that Church to allow such a life to pass away without some suitable memorial—something to mark fitly her sense of the benefits he conferred, and of the magnitude of the loss she mourns. Actuated by this feeling, the council, at their first meeting subsequent to his death, unanimously adopted the following resolutions:

Proposed by Thomas P. Cairns, Esq., seconded by the Dean of Clonmacnoise—

That this council desires to record its deep sense of the irreparable loss it has sustained by the death of its beloved and revered chairman, the late Right Honourable and Most Reverend Samuel Butcher, D.D., Bishop of this Diocese. That this loss, while most keenly felt by the Church of Ireland at large, in depriving her of one of her most distinguished prelates, whose learning, munificence, piety, and incessant devotion to her interests, contributed so largely to her successful reorganization, falls with peculiar severity on this council, over which he presided during so trying a period with such marked ability and judgment, and in which his earnest and cheerful devotion to the interests of the diocese has always been conspicuous, while his unvarying kindness and gentleness have endeared him to all with whom he was brought into contact. That we desire at the same time to express our profound sympathy for his bereaved family in their deep affliction, and that for this purpose a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Mrs. Butcher by our secretaries.

Proposed by Thomas P. Cairns, Esq., seconded by the Dean of Clonmacnoise—

That with a view to perpetuate the memory of the late Right Honourable and Most Reverend Samuel Butcher, D.D., Lord Bishop of Meath, and to commemorate the services he conferred on the Church of Ireland, as Regius Professor of Divinity in the University of Dublin, and subsequently as Bishop of Meath, and to mark a sense of the loss sustained by his death, a fund be formed to be called "The Butcher Memorial Fund," to be applied in founding a professorship in connection with the divinity school of the Church of Ireland, to be called "The Butcher Memorial Professorship."

That contributions to this fund be invited, first from the members of the Church of Ireland in the Diocese of Meath; secondly from the members of the Church of Ireland at large; thirdly, from all such as knew and valued the worth of the late Bishop of Meath, and that the members of the Diocesan Council be appointed to carry the foregoing resolution into effect.

In accordance with the latter resolution, a considerable sum of money (about £2,500) was subscribed, but the idea of founding a professorship was abandoned, and instead, a number of exhibitions were founded in connection with the divinity school, which are awarded to students who have passed their junior divinity year. The amount in each case is not more than fifty nor less than twenty pounds. The capital, at present amounting to £2,583, is lodged with the Representative Church Body.

The bishopric having thus become vacant, the diocesan synod was summoned by the Lord Primate to assemble on the eighteenth of October, 1876, for the election of a new bishop. It was felt by all to be a momentous occasion. We have seen that in the early days, shortly after the Anglo-Norman invasion, the synod of Meath on several occasions elected the bishop. In those synods, however, only the clergy were

represented. In this case the clergy and the faithful laity were to meet together for that purpose. It was therefore a new thing. Never before in the history of the diocese had such an event occurred. It was also one of the first elections held since the disestablishment of the Church. Three other bishops had been appointed—in Cashel, Kilmore, and Ossory. This was to be the fourth.

Before the synod assembled, the members met together for the celebration of the Holy Communion in Saint John's Church, Fishamble Street, Dublin. Then, under the presidency of the Lord Primate, and with the Right Honourable J. T. Ball, LL.D., acting as assessor, the synod met in the Synod Hall, Christchurch Place, for the serious and responsible task of electing a new bishop.

On the first voting, which was to form a select list, it was found that five names were to be included. These were, Lord Plunket, who obtained 94 lay and 43 clerical votes; the Very Reverend Achilles Daunt, Dean of Cork, who had 81 lay and 41 clerical votes; the Venerable Doctor Reichel, Archdeacon of Meath, who was supported by 46 clergyman and 19 laymen; the Reverend Doctor Bell, Rector of Kells, who obtained 29 clerical and 18 lay votes, and the Reverend Canon Jellett, afterwards Dean of Saint Patrick's, who was voted for by 30 of the clergy and 21 of the laity. It was easily seen from these numbers that the choice lay practically between Lord Plunket and the Dean of Cork. Accordingly, on the second voting, few suffrages were given to any of the other candidates. Lord Plunket obtained this time 84 lay votes and 56 clerical, while Dean Daunt was supported by 46 laymen and 22 clergymen. This showed that Lord Plunket had obtained a decided majority over the dean, but

as it did not amount to two-thirds of the members present and voting, another vote was necessary, in which the name of Lord Plunket was alone submitted to the synod. When the result was declared, it was found that 105 out of 116 laymen had voted for him, and 74 out of 79 clergymen. This was decisive, and thus the synod came to a happy termination by the almost unanimous election of the new bishop.

William Conyngham Plunket, who thus succeeded to the See of Meath, was the son of the Honourable John Plunket, Q.C., and was born in the year 1828. His uncle, Lord Plunket, was Bishop of Tuam, and by him he was ordained in 1857. As soon as he was made deacon he became private secretary and chaplain to the bishop, and a year later he was appointed rector of the united parishes of Kilmoylan and Cummer In 1864 he was appointed Treasurer of Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, and from that time took a leading part in the affairs of the Church of Ireland. At the time of disestablishment he was one of the delegates to the General Convention, and took part in the discussions of that body, working in conjunction with Archdeacon Stopford, with whom he was in almost entire agreement as to principles, policy and doctrine. At about the same time (1871) he succeeded to the peerage, becoming fourth Baron Plunket. He soon became one of the leaders of the evangelical party in the Church, and this fact, together with his position as a peer of the realm, marked him as one fitted to rise to the highest eminence. It was therefore natural that when the Diocese of Meath became vacant his name should have been one of the first to suggest itself. Some leading men in the diocese communicated with him beforehand, and on his intimating to them his willingness to accept the office if elected, it was generally

felt that the election was a foregone conclusion. While the matter was still pending, he wrote to his mother:

The Meath Diocese is the only one (with the exception of the Archbishopric of Dublin) which I could well undertake to think of just now. The Diocese of Meath, strangely enough, has its centre (so far as practical convenience is concerned) outside of it. Its synods and councils and boards of nomination are all held in Dublin, and it would therefore be quite possible, and indeed most convenient (were I appointed), that I should reside a great part of the year in Dublin. Then again the palace at Ardbraccan (a very fine and comfortable house) is only two hours rail from Dublin. The diocese is in good working order, and is compact, so that the labour of superintendence would not be excessive, and the clergy and laity, so far as I can learn, are as a whole not of a troublesome or fratricidal disposition! Altogether, if I am to allow myself to be nominated for a bishopric at all, I don't know any diocese for which I should more wish to be elected. [1]

We have already seen that the surmises of this letter were realized. Lord Plunket was elected to the bishopric, and was consecrated at Armagh on Sunday, the tenth of December, 1876. On the afternoon of the same day the bishop wrote again to his mother:

I cannot help writing one line to say that the consecration has taken place, and I am now Bishop of Meath. If I have any qualifications to fit me for the high office upon which in God's Providence I have been called upon to enter, let me say that I owe it all, under God, to what I first learned from you, and therefore you shall be the first to hear of the result from your affectionate first-born son.

Letters such as these betray the loving and affectionate disposition of the man, and the many who remember his episcopate both in Meath and in Dublin will bear testimony that this was eminently his characteristic in the ruling of his diocese.

[1] Howe, *Life of Archbishop Plunket.*

Lord Plunket was a man of wide sympathies, and his name soon became well known outside his diocese, in consequence of the part which he took in promoting movements towards reformation, especially in Mexico, Spain and Portugal. The action which he afterwards took in consecrating a bishop for the Reformed Church of Spain led to much controversy and recrimination. That, however, does not concern us here, as the consecration referred to took place after he had severed his connection with Meath. It may be enough here to remark that it was while Bishop of Meath that his attention was first directed to the subject. A Dublin clergyman wrote to him, setting forth the facts of the case, and urging on him the desirability of giving these reformers the opportunity of establishing an episcopal church by consecrating for them a bishop of their own. Bishop Plunket carefully considered the subject, and became convincen that this was the right thing to do, and having once made up his mind on this point, he took up the work with an ardour which no opposition was able to quench. He himself visited Spain, and satisfied himself as to the genuineness of the movement. He then made a strong appeal to those in this country who were interested in the cause, and was instrumental in raising a considerable sum of money. To a great extent he carried his own clergy with him, but there were some who held aloof, and it was even muttered that he was so much taken up with work abroad, that he had little time or thought left for the work of his diocese. One of the clergy—a dignitary of the diocese—went so far as to write to the bishop a letter of remonstrance. Many men would have shown bitter resentment at being thus called to account by one of his own officers. Bishop Plunket, however, while he did not accept the rebuke, because he believed it to

be unmerited, answered in the spirit of a true Christian gentleman. He replied:

I hasten to assure you that your letter has not made me angry with you. It is the part of a friend to speak what he believes to be truth to a friend at any cost, and we have been too long on terms of affection with one another to feel aggrieved by frank and kindly speaking. All I would ask is that you will receive what I have to say in a similar spirit.

He then goes on to say that much of the absence from the diocese has been due to the illness of his wife, and that on this account he had several times thought of resigning his episcopate. He shows too, that, so far from his having lost interest in his diocese, it had prospered in a remarkable way under his rule; and then, coming to the real point of difference, he adds:

Only one word more. If it be thought that because of the deep interest which I feel in the work of reform in other churches my interest in my own Church is likely to falter, all I can say is that such a principle would contradict every experience of the past. No church has ever shown life or prospered that has lacked the outgoing spirit of missionary zeal, and I can truly say that if any one motive more than another urges me to work as, God helping me, I shall continue to do, on behalf of such a cause as that of Spanish reform, it is the interest which I feel in the honour of my own Church, and the desire that by helping others she may bring back into her bosom an abundant blessing in return. [2]

The first task that confronted the diocese on the appointment of Lord Plunket was to provide an income for the new bishop. The method adopted in this case was practically the same as the provision made for the incomes of the clergy. At the disendowment the diocese received the capital value of Bishop Butcher's annuity, and undertook to pay him his salary as long as he lived. If he had lived to the average term of life

[2] Memoir of Lord Plunket.

all this capital would have been eaten up, but in the meantime subscriptions would have been accumulating year by year, and these would form an endowment from which the future bishops would be paid. Already during the lifetime of Bishop Butcher, a sum of £9,365 had been put by in this way. The early death of the bishop left a large part of the capital still untouched, and thus £11,330 was added to the fund. A special effort was then made to collect subscriptions, and in this way £7,330 was added. The London Sustentation Fund Committee gave the handsome donation of £2,000; so that altogether a capital sum was realized of about £30,500. The interest on this capital, together with annual subscriptions, and a grant of £1,000 a year for three years from the General Sustentation Fund, not only sufficed for the proposed stipend of £1,500 a year, but also left a substantial balance to accumulate until the bishopric was fully endowed. At a later period another special effort was made, and the whole amount was contributed.

At the same time the palace and demesne at Ardbraccan were purchased for £10,325. It was intended to make an effort towards raising this sum as soon as the endowment of the bishopric was completed. In the meantime the bishop was charged four and a quarter per cent. on this purchase money as rent. Bishop Plunket took up his residence at the palace, but when he was translated to Dublin, it was felt that the house was unsuitable to the reduced income of the See, and eventually it was sold at a price less by £1,825 than that at which it had been purchased. The glebe-house of Ardbraccan was then bought from the parish, and at present, under the name of Bishops-court, forms the episcopal residence.

With so many calls on the liberality of the churchmen

in the diocese, it might well be supposed that other things would suffer. This, however, was by no means the case. In the Report of the diocese for 1877 particulars are given of restorations and improvements in different churches, amounting to considerably more than six thousand pounds, and in the following year there is a paragraph which tells that—

The Council are happy to report that the work of church building and church restoration, to which they invited special attention last year, still progresses with unabated zeal. Three new churches are being built at the present time : one at Durrow, at the sole expense of the Honourable Otway Toler ; one at Moyliscar, at the sole expense of Mrs. Tottenham ; and one at Syddan, from a bequest left by the late Miss Ball. At Moydrum, a church has been built, at the sole expense of Lord Castlemaine, as a domestic chapel, but largely attended by the church people of the surrounding district, as well as by members of his lordship's household. Moydrum church was consecrated during the present year.

The work thus begun has been steadily continued until the present time, and it may now be said that there is scarcely a church in the diocese which has not been renovated and beautified since disestablishment—a fact which may be taken as a gratifying indication that that event, from which so many disasters were anticipated, has not in any way robbed the Church of its life and viguor.

New troubles arose about this time due to the action of the Land League and the conspiracy against the payment of rent. The land-owning class were zealous supporters of the Church, and when they found their incomes reduced, it was inevitable that the Church should suffer from their loss. In 1881 the Diocesan Council had to report a falling off of £813 in the cash receipts for assessment, and commenting on this, they say :

When it is remembered that the country is at present passing through a crisis of unexampled severity, affecting

most seriously almost every class in the community, and that the class which has suffered most severely comprises those who have been hitherto the most steady and liberal supporters of the Church, it is only to be expected that we should feel the effect of this state of things in a general falling off in the contributions. It is also to be feared that the results appearing in the present report are not the worst that may be anticipated.

These anticipations were justified, for in the next year there was a further falling off of £404, but the Council give it then as their opinion that "the crisis arising out of the Land League agitation has been well nigh passed, and that we may now look forward to a general though gradual improvement in the condition of the country." This forecast also proved to be correct, for in the next year there was a small increase in the receipts, which improvement continued until matters righted themselves; and in the meantime it was a matter of congratulation that in no case had the income of any clergyman to be reduced.

The effects of the disturbed state of the country were manifested in other ways besides this diminution in subscriptions. Many spoke of leaving the country, and there was a fear that there would be a large exodus of the wealthier class of people. Bishop Plunket, both in public and in private, did his best to dissuade people from doing what he regarded as an act of desertion. He was an ardent patriot, and he held that it was the duty of every loyalist to remain at his post, quoting with effect the words of the psalmist: "Put thou thy trust in the Lord, and be doing good: dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." One of his best known poems was on this subject, and a couple of stanzas from it may fitly close this chapter:—

From Irish soil you love to roam,
But let me just remind you,
You'll nowhere find a happier home
Than what you leave behind you.

The world explore from shore to shore,
'Twill be a vain endeavour :
On scenes so bright you'll never light,
Oh never—never—never.

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And now, my friends, go if you will,
And visit other nations,
But leave your hearts in Erin still,
Among your poor relations.
The spot of earth that gave you birth,
Resolve to love for ever ;
And you'll repent that good intent,
Oh never—never—never.

CHAPTER XLI.

Bishops Reichel and Peacocke.

In 1884 Lord Plunket was elected to the Archbishopric of Dublin, and thereby the Bishopric of Meath was rendered once more vacant. The Diocesan Synod accordingly met on Wednesday, the fourth of February, 1883, for the election of a new bishop. After the first voting it was found that three names were to be placed on the select list. These were the Very Reverend Charles Parsons Reichel, Dean of Clonmacnoise; the Reverend Joseph S. Bell, Rector of Kells; and the Reverend Canon Wynne, Incumbent of Saint Matthias's Church, Dublin, and afterwards Bishop of Killaloe. The first two were beneficed in the Diocese of Meath, and were well known throughout the whole Church of Ireland as preachers of more than ordinary ability. Canon Wynne was also equally well known as incumbent of an important Dublin church. In the subsequent voting it became evident that the choice lay between Doctor Reichel and Doctor Bell, but neither of them was able to obtain the majority of two-thirds, which is necessary to secure an election. The matter was therefore referred to the bench of bishops for decision. Before the bishops sat for this purpose, an objection was made against the proceedings, on the ground that the name of Canon Wynne should have been submitted to the Synod, and a vote taken as to whether his name should be included in the list from which the bishops

were to make their choice. This objection was upheld by the Court of the General Synod, and accordingly the Synod had to meet again, which it did on the fifteenth of June. Again it was found impossible to obtain a two-thirds majority for any one candidate, but on this occasion only the names of Dean Reichel and Canon Bell were placed on the select list, and from these two the bishops were asked to make a choice. The prelates met on the nineteenth of August, and elected Dean Reichel, who was accordingly consecrated in Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, on the twenty-ninth of the following September.

The new bishop was son of a Moravian clergyman, and was born in 1816. He was educated partly in the University of Berlin, and partly in Trinity College, Dublin. In the latter place he had a distinguished career, and soon became the best classical scholar of his class. He had some thoughts of reading for a fellowship, but relinquished the idea, and took Holy Orders, being ordained for the curacy of Saint Mary's Church in Dublin. There he continued for four years, until, in 1850, he was appointed Professor of Latin in Queen's College, Belfast. In 1864 he entered the Diocese of Meath, being appointed to the Vicarage of Mullingar. From that he passed, in 1875, to the Incumbency of Trim, becoming at the same time Archdeacon of Meath. In 1878 he was appointed Professor of Ecclesiastical History in Trinity College, an office which he held along with his incumbency, and in 1882 he became Dean of Clonmacnoise. He was also Canon of Saint Patrick's Cathedral, being the first representative canon for Meath. Thus he had been for more than twenty years associated with the diocese before he was called on to undertake the responsible office of its bishop.

The memory of Bishop Reichel is still so fresh in the

minds of many that little need here be said about his character and attainments. As a scholar, he had few equals in the Irish Church at the time, and in the subjects in which he had specialized—some branches of liturgical study, for example—he was without a rival. As a preacher, too, he stood alone. He never preached without his manuscript, and he accompanied the reading with no action whatever; there was a singular absence of anything that could be called "flowers of rhetoric;" but every sentence was terse and forceful, and his voice was of such clearness and penetration that not a word was lost. He often chose the evidences of Christianity as the subject of his discourses, and in such cases the argument was clearly stated and driven home with irresistible force. In controversy he was what would be called a hard hitter, and he left on many the impression that his words were always bitter and cutting. All those who were acquainted with the man in his private life, knew that he was the very opposite of all this. He was full of kindness, with a heart easily touched, and a ready hand to help those who were in need.

While the diocese was still vacant, the Bench of Bishops met, and by a unanimous vote determined that Meath should be deprived of the precedence which had been accorded to her in former times. The Bishop of Meath always ranked next to the archbishops, and was styled "Most Reverend," whereas the other bishops were styled "Right Reverend." This distinction was observed in the Irish Church Act of 1869, but in 1885 a new rule of precedence was issued from Dublin Castle which directed that in future "all Archbishops of the Protestant Episcopalian Church in Ireland, and all Roman Catholic Archbishops in Ireland," were to take rank according to the dates

of consecration or translation, and that similarly all bishops of either church were to have precedence according to date of consecration.

It might have been expected that a document like this, which gave to the Church of Ireland the unauthorized title of "Protestant Episcopalian Church," would be ignored by the bishops in any action in which they had unfettered liberty, but they do not seem to have looked on it in this light, and accordingly, in the General Synod of 1885, the Archbishop of Dublin made the following communication from the bench of Bishops: "Her Majesty the Queen having regulated the Court precedence of the prelates of the Church of Ireland, *inter se*, the archbishops and bishops have passed the following resolution in reference to the ecclesiastical precedence of the future Bishops of Meath:—'That in future the Bishops of Meath shall rank next in ecclesiastical precedence amongst the bishops according to the date of their consecration, and that the style of the Bishops of Meath shall be similar to the style of the other bishops of the Church of Ireland.'" The archbishop went on to say that the resolution did not emanate from himself. "It might seem very ungrateful, but he came to the conclusion that if ever there was such a change, the present, when the See was vacant, was the proper time to make it." The Bishop of Down and Connor followed, and he, too, disclaimed responsibility for the resolution, though he had supported it. He said that the Lord Primate had written to him on the subject, stating "I heartily agree with the enclosed resolution, which puts an end to what will be found an anomaly—the inconvenience without any counterbalancing advantage whatever."

The following statement, drawn up in 1876 by Sir J. Bernard Burke, Ulster King at Arms, will show the

historical grounds on which the claim of Meath rested:

Anciently Meath was one of the five provinces, and the seat of the chief monarch of Ireland. In 1152, Cardinal Paparo, Legate *a latere*, brought over four palliums, and assigned one to each of the four bishops, Armagh, Dublin, Cashel, and Tuam, erecting those Sees into archbishoprics. As some consolation to Meath, and in recognition of the former royal eminence of that province, the Bishop of Meath was styled Most Reverend, and given the first place among bishops—*primus inter pares*. De Burgho, in his *Hibernia Dominica*, says, "Episcopus Midensis primus semper est Provinciæ Armachanæ suffraganeus, quanquam enim inter caeteros Hiberniæ Episcopos esset consecratione junior eos nihilominus loco precederet."

At the Reformation, the Protestant Church found the Bishop of Meath accorded the first place among bishops, and has ever since allowed that pre-eminence to the See. The Church Disestablishment Act of 1871 interferes in no way with ecclesiastical pre-eminence, but while severing the link between Church and State, has simply disallowed a precedence derived from the state connection to prelates of the Irish Church consecrated after the passing of the Act. Consequently, in state ceremonials and in social meetings, a bishop of the Irish Church, who was such at the time of the passing of the Act, would, however junior in ecclesiastical rank, have precedence; but not so ecclesiastically. In all church congresses, and on all ecclesiastical occasions, the Bishop of Meath, however junior in his consecration, is still clearly entitled to the same pre-eminence as ever. He is, as he always has been, *primus inter pares* among Irish bishops.

Bishop Reichel was not the man who would, without protest, relinquish any of the ancient rights and prerogatives of his See. "He had the dislike of a student of history for that kind of reform which proceeds from a mere passion for symmetry."[1] He was no sooner consecrated than he raised his voice against this action of the bishops, in which he

[1] Memoir.

maintained they had exceeded their power, and he demanded that the matter should be tried before a properly constituted tribunal. The clergy and laity of the diocese backed him up in his contention, and in the Synod of 1885 passed the following resolution:

> That the clerical and lay members of the Meath Diocesan Synod most respectfully refuse to accept the resolution passed by the archbishops and bishops of the Church of Ireland, and communicated to the General Synod at its last meeting, purporting to deprive the Bishops of Meath of the precedence within the Church which they have continuously enjoyed for more than five centuries, and to which they are entitled as a matter of right.

At the next meeting of the bishops, which was held on the third of December, 1885, Bishop Reichel carried his point, and the following resolution was passed:

> That it be referred to the Court of the General Synod, in accordance with sec. 3, c. 2, of the Statutes of the General Synod, 1885, to determine, in the event of a vacancy in the Archiepiscopal See of Armagh, who shall be entitled to convene the Diocesan Synod of Armagh and Clogher, and to preside at the same, as being the person for the time being authorized to convene the Diocesan Synod, cap. v., sec. 1, and cap. ii., sec. 26. Statutes General Synod; and to advise the archbishops and bishops as to what precedence the Bishop of Meath is entitled to as regards the other bishops of the Church of Ireland.

In accordance with this resolution, the Court of the General Synod assembled on the eleventh of January, 1886. The sitting members were the Archbishop of Dublin, the Bishop of Limerick, the Right Honourable Lord Chief Justice Fitzgibbon, the Honourable John Fitzhenry Townsend, Judge of the Court of Admiralty, and the Honourable Sterne Ball Miller, Judge of the

Court of Bankruptcy. After hearing the arguments of Counsel, the court gave its decision in favour of Doctor Reichel's contention, and made the following order :

> Upon vacancy of the See of Armagh, the Bishop of Meath is, by the Constitution of the Church of Ireland, entitled to convene the Diocesan Synod of Armagh and Clogher, and to preside at the same, or to appoint a commissary so to do, as being the bishop of the province first in order of precedence, and as such the person for the time being authorized to convene the Diocesan Synod.
>
> The Bishop of Meath for the time being is entitled to precedence among the Archbishops and Bishops of the Church of Ireland next after the Archbishop of Dublin, and before the other bishops of the said Church.

Thus the ancient prerogatives of the See were secured, and the position of Meath as the premier diocese in Ireland was established.

The Board of Education for the Diocese of Meath was established in 1890. For two or three years previously the matter had been discussed between the heads of the diocese and the Judicial Commissioners constituted by the Educational Endowments Act, 1885, and the negotiations resulted in an Order of Council, by which the new board was formed. It was to consist of the Bishop, Dean, and Archdeacon, as *ex officio* members, together with four clergymen and six laymen, elected by the Diocesan Synod, and additional co-opted governors, not exceeding five in number. Their trust was to hold and apply endowments for elementary and intermediate education in the diocese, to promote technical instruction, and to promote and encourage religious education. The Board took over the administration of the funds of the Preston School at Navan, together with some other less important endowments, and became trustees of all the school

buildings in the diocese. At present it also administers the funds contributed through the diocese for the promotion of religious education, arranges for the annual examinations in Scripture and Church formularies, and provides result fees for the teachers.

About this time two large bequests were left to the diocese for the benefit of poor parishes. Mr. Morgan, of Navan, left a sum which yields about £350 per annum, and Miss Bolton, of Bective, left money and property which gives a yearly income of over £200. Mr. T. P. Cairnes, the financial secretary of the diocese, added to these bequests a sum of £2,829, yielding £101 per annum, and drew up a scheme by which, from these three funds, the income of every parish not exceeding £200 in value was increased by ten per cent.

During the whole of Doctor Reichel's episcopacy he was more or less in feeble health. He had frequent attacks of gout, and every winter seemed to bring with it severe bronchitis or pneumonia. Towards the end, these attacks increased in intensity, and in 1894 he passed away in the seventy-seventh year of his age. His friend, Canon MacDonnell, of Peterborough, wrote of him :

> To those who knew Doctor Reichel from his early days, and the intense piety and high motives which influenced him, it was a pleasure to see that, as years passed, he was better understood and appreciated. Now that his race is run and his work finished, what Irish churchman does not feel proud of him as one who adorned and did honour to the Church of which he was a prelate ? In quieter times and in the evening of his days those qualities shone out that were partially obscured in the dust of controversy and the party struggles of the Irish Synods. Even at his advanced age of seventy-seven the Church can ill spare such a man. Like the blaze of golden light that follows the actual setting of the sun, the true greatness of the man will be more seen when all clouds of prejudice have been dispersed by death. Among his intimate

friends the Bishop of Meath's death leaves a blank which the outside public can never understand.[2]

For the third time now since disestablishment, the Diocese of Meath was called on to elect a bishop. It accordingly met on the twenty-sixth of April, 1894. Just on the eve of the Synod the diocese sustained another great loss in the death of Mr. T. P. Cairnes, who had filled the office of financial secretary from the time of the re-organization of the Church. As a financier he had few equals in Ireland, and was one of the most trusted advisers of the Representative Church Body. To the Diocese of Meath he gave his very best energies and ability, and he had the satisfaction of seeing her finances placed on a sound basis, and their reliability abundantly proved, before his death. We have already seen something of his liberality, but it was shown, not merely in large gifts, such as that which has been noticed, but in the help which he constantly gave to poor and struggling parishes, where he knew that the people had difficulty in keeping up their assessments. In his own town of Drogheda he has left an enduring memorial in the dwellings provided by his liberality for the working classes. When the Synod assembled for the election of a bishop, the first business done was to pass the following resolution :

That we, the Synod of the Diocese of Meath, desire to express in the strongest manner our very deep sense of the irreparable loss which our diocese has sustained in the death of its Honorary Financial Secretary, Thomas Plunket Cairnes, Esq., who, for a period of twenty-four years conducted the financial affairs of the diocese with consummate ability and unwearied assiduity. We also desire to make mention of the munificent liberality which from the very first characterized all our late Honorary Secretary's dealings with the diocese. We feel that his loss is not confined to the Diocese of Meath,

[2] Memoir.

but that it is one in which the whole Church of Ireland is concerned. We also desire to convey to Mrs. Cairnes and his family the expression of our deepest sympathy with them in the very deep affliction which has so unexpectedly befallen them.

The Synod then proceeded to the election for which it had been called together, and a select list was formed, consisting of the names of Canon Peacocke, Rector of Monkstown in the Diocese of Dublin; Canon Keene, Rector of Navan; and the Very Reverend Hercules H. Dickenson, Dean of the Chapel Royal, and son of a former Bishop of Meath. There was considerable difficulty in coming to a conclusion, as the clergy and laity could not agree as to which name should be supported, but in the end all three names were submitted to the bench of bishops, and the choice of the prelates fell on Canon Peacocke, who was accordingly consecrated on the eleventh of June, 1894, in the Cathedral of Armagh.

This is not the place to speak of Bishop Peacocke, as he is still amongst us, worthily presiding over the Archdiocese of Dublin, to which he was elected three years later. Suffice it to say that during his short stay in Meath he displayed those remarkable powers of organization which he had displayed as a parish clergyman, both at Saint George's, Dublin, and also at Monkstown. He was quickly winning the confidence of both clergy and laity when he was translated to the higher office which he now fills so well.

The last time that he presided at the Diocesan Council was on the ninth of June, 1897, and on that occasion the following resolution was passed:

That the members of the Meath Diocesan Council cannot separate without leaving on record their feeling of regret that

this is the last occasion on which they shall be presided over by their beloved and respected bishop. While they most heartily congratulate His Grace on his promotion to the arduous position to which he has been called, and pray that he may be long spared to preside over the Archdiocese of Dublin, they desire to express their sense of the loss which they have sustained, and to assure His Grace that their best wishes go with him in his removal from the diocese.[3]

[3] Minutes of the Diocesan Council of Meath.

CHAPTER XLII.

A Final Retrospect.

Meath has had more experience of episcopal elections than any other diocese in Ireland. On the translation of Doctor Peacocke to the See of Dublin she was called on for the fourth time to elect a bishop. Again it was found impossible to obtain a two-thirds majority for any one name, and accordingly two names were sent up to the Bench of Bishops by the Synod which met on the tenth of August, 1897. These were the Reverend Canon Keene, Rector of Navan, and the Reverend Doctor Bernard, Archbishop King's Professor of Divinity in Trinity College. Of these Canon Keene was chosen, and he was accordingly consecrated at Armagh on the seventeenth of October in the same year. He still presides over the See in which most of his ministerial life has been spent, and it is the prayer of his many friends that he may be long spared to fill that exalted position. It would be out of place to speak of his qualifications or character. It may suffice to say that his college record has rarely been equalled, and that the range of subjects in which he distinguished himself shows a versatility of powers which few can boast. He obtained the highest distinctions in every subject that he studied, and these included Classics, Mathematics, Ethics, Hebrew, and Divinity. No further explanation need be desired of the fact that the clergy, almost unanimously, and the laity, by a large majority, wished to have him as their bishop.

The events of Bishop Keene's episcopate are so recent, that only a few need here be recorded. The most important, from the financial point of view, was the formation of what is known as the "Supplemental Scheme." The funds which were available for this purpose were the profits of commutation, and how these profits arose has been already explained. In 1895 it was found that the interest on the commutation capital was sufficient to pay the annuities that were still remaining, and the year following there was a balance of £484. The time had come, therefore, when this fund could be dealt with, and the interest, as it became available by the death of annuitants, applied for the benefit of the diocese. The matter was accordingly taken in hand by the Diocesan Council, and after much consideration a scheme was drawn up, and submitted to the synod which met on the twenty-sixth of August, 1899. The capital that would be eventually available amounted to £73,831, and the interest on this came to £2,570 a year. As amended by the synod, and with some subsequent modifications, the Supplemental Scheme provides that out of this interest the ten senior clergymen in the diocese are to receive an addition to their salaries of £30 a year each. The next ten in order of seniority receive £20, and the next twenty £15. The Rural Deans receive a stipend of £10 a year each; £700 a year is credited to the Superannuation Fund; £200 to the Supplemental Fund, and the remainder allowed to accumulate as a reserve fund for future contingencies. The first of these provisions, it will be observed, secures that a clergyman who never gets promotion beyond a parish with the minimum income of £200 a year, is secure of obtaining in addition £20 a year from the Bolton, Morgan, and Cairnes Funds, £12 as a bonus under the Financial

Scheme, and £30 from the Supplemental Scheme, making in all £262—not a very princely income, it is true, but fair enough when it is remembered that this is the minimum, and that considerably more than half the parishes in the diocese would yield a larger stipend.

The Supplemental Scheme too, in conjunction with the Central Superannuation Fund of the Representative Church Body, enables the diocese to give a retiring allowance to those clergymen who are disabled by age or infirmity, the amount being calculated on the same principle as is adopted by the government for the superannuation of civil servants, namely, one-sixtieth of the income at retirement for every year served, with a maximum of two-thirds.

In the first report issued after the consecration of Bishop Keene, three deaths are noted of prominent workers in the diocese. These are Mr. Robert Fowler, Archdeacon Nugent, and the Reverend Alfred T. Harvey, Rector of Athboy. Mr. Fowler was one of the orginal members of the Diocesan Council when it was first constituted, and for many years had served as treasurer for the eastern portion of the diocese. He co-operated ably with Mr. T. P. Cairnes in the drawing up of the Financial Scheme and in the subsequent carrying out of its provisions. Alike in the Council and in the synod his word always carried the greatest weight, for it was felt that reliance could always be placed on his wisdom and judgment. Archdeacon Nugent held the office of Honorary Clerical Secretary from the time of disestablishment. He was a man of great business capacity, and became the trusted adviser and friend of each successive bishop. He was a ripe scholar and to the end of his days a diligent student, yet of such a quiet and retiring disposition that few beyond his

intimate friends were aware of the extent of his powers. He was appointed Archdeacon of Meath by Bishop Plunket in 1882, and became Rector of Trim in 1892. The Reverend Alfred T. Harvey was best known in connection with the Church Choral Union, which he was instrumental in founding when serving as Curate of Trim. In later years he acted as secretary of the Union, and arranged for the Choral Festivals which were held every year. He was also Diocesan Secretary for Meath of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and was Secretary of the Diocesan Committee of Missions and Charities. To the regret of all his friends he was carried away by a painful disease at a comparatively early age.

The Diocesan Report for 1897, commenting on these three deaths, says:

> The year has thus been one in which the diocese has suffered serious loss by the death of old and valued workers. It must, however, be a matter of thankfulness that these wise and efficient labourers were spared to us until the work of re-construction consequent on disestablishment had been almost completed, and the Council feel that the satisfactory reports which they are able to offer year after year are largely due to the energies of men who are no longer with us. They have been taken away, but their work remains, and it is now for us to carry on and perfect that which they have so well begun.

These words express well the spirit in which we should think of those men who, by their liberality and ability did so much for the diocese in the time of trial, and they form a suitable introduction to a few reminiscences which may here be given of some of those of the clergy and laity whose names ought not to be forgotten.

Mention must first be made of Mr. W. Barlow Smythe, of Barbavilla. He was present at the first meeting of the Diocesan Council, and for many years

was one of the most regular attendants. He was the first lay Diocesan Nominator, was one of the Diocesan Trustees, and a member of the Diocesan Court. His connection with the diocese was brought to an end in a tragic way. It was in the days of Land League troubles, and one Sunday, as he was returning from church, a shot was fired at his carriage. There can be no doubt that it was intended for Mr. Smythe, but it struck a lady who was in the carriage with him, who was killed on the spot. As a result, Mr. Smythe left the country, and resigned all the offices which he held in connection with the diocese. On receiving his resignation, the Diocesan Council passed the following resolution:

> Resolved, that we learn with very sincere regret that W. B. Smythe, Esq., has resigned all the offices which he held in connection with the diocese for so many years, and the duties of which he discharged with so much zeal, efficiency, and advantage to the best interests of the Church in the diocese. We desire further, to express our deep abhorrence of the deplorable event which makes it impossible for him to reside with safety on his estate.

This was passed on the tenth of January, 1883, and it reveals in a very striking way the dangers which were at that time confronting alike the Church and the Country.

Another name prominently associated with the work of the diocese was that of Major Dalton, of Kells, who also was a member of the first Diocesan Council. He was an indefatigable worker, and took a lively interest in the Bible Society, especially in the Meath branch, which employed colporteurs to work in different parts of the diocese. The Honourable Robert J. Handcock, of Athlone, was another member of the original council, and for many years acted as Diocesan Treasurer for the Westmeath district. He seldom took part in debate, but he was one of the most regular

attendants at the meetings, and transacted much of the financial business. His successor in the office of Diocesan Treasurer, Mr. Edward Dames Longworth, has also, quite lately, passed from us, his life, which promised so much of usefulness, being cut off unexpectedly in its prime. Other names that should be mentioned are Doctor Joly, by whose liberality the parish of Castlejordan has been endowed, Mr. Richard Chaloner, Mr. John Tisdall, Judge Gamble, Colonel Cooper, Mr. G. A. Rochfort Boyd, and Mr. J. L. Naper. There are many others that might be noted, for there is scarcely a parish in the diocese that has not had some who have rendered conspicuous service to the Church. As we look back on those years since disestablishment we may say of the churchmen of Meath as a body that they were men of whom any diocese might be proud.

Among the clergy, too, there are names that deserve remembrance. The Reverend Canon Bell, Rector of Kells, and his brother, the Reverend James A. Bell, Rector of Banagher, were both remarkable men. Of Canon Bell we have already seen that his was one of the names put forward when the bishopric was vacant, and the position which he held in the diocese may be judged from the number of votes cast in his favour, even when against such a formidable rival as Bishop Reichel. He was in his day one of the best preachers in the Irish Church. Shortly after the episcopal election he resigned his parish, but retained his position as representative Canon in Saint Patrick's National Cathedral. In his last days he suffered much from a long and painful illness, which he bore with wonderful resignation and fortitude. His brother James was almost equally gifted as a preacher, and was besides a brilliant scholar. He left the diocese to

take up work in England under the London Jews' Society. In the succession of Deans—Brownlow, Reichel, Swift, Dowse, and Craig—we have men, all of whom worked well, and were highly esteemed for their work's sake. Mention should also be made of the Reverend T. G. Caulfield, Rector of Ballyloughloe, by whose liberality that parish is endowed with glebe lands which are valued at fifty pounds a year; the Reverend John Westrop Brady, long a member of the Council; the Reverend Francis Hopkins, Rector of Trim; the Reverend Duncan Brownlow, Rector of Donaghpatrick, who succeeded Mr. Harvey as secretary of the Church Choral Union, and was, besides, secretary of the Meath Protestant Orphan Society; the Reverend Frederick W. Wetherell, Rector of Rathmolyon; the Reverend J. H. Davidson, of Dunshaughlin, and many others. Nor can we omit to mention one who has been recently called away, the Reverend Maxwell Coote, Rector of Killoughey. He was at the time of his death the "father" of the diocese, and had spent the most of his ministerial life in Meath. He was remarkable for his liberality, and during his lifetime subscribed regularly to many poor parishes in his own immediate neighbourhood. By his will he left £2,000 for the endowment of his own parish of Killoughey, £1,000 to Tullamore, and £1,000 to Ballyboy. The residue of his estate, which it is expected will reach something close on £30,000, he left to the poor parishes of the diocese of Meath, being the largest benefaction which the diocese has received since the time of disestablishment.

Looking back on these years, we may now ask, what is the progress that has been made? But when we come to answer this question, we become conscious of the fact that the real tokens of progress are of a kind

that cannot be tabulated. The Kingdom of Heaven does not come with observation, and hence the historian can give no account of how sinners have been led to Christ, and saints have been strengthened, and believers have been built up in their most holy faith. These are things that are known to the great Master in Heaven, and to Him alone. All we can do is to tell about material things—the building of churches, the collection of funds, the perfection of organization, and the like. But things like these, though not in themselves spiritual, are not without their significance, and may be taken as outward signs of that which is inward and spiritual. Those who love the house of God sufficiently to give of their substance for its support, are more likely to be true worshippers of Him to whom the House belongs than those who never make any sacrifice or practice any self-denial for the sake of their religion. With these thoughts then in our minds, we may take a retrospect of the past thirty-seven years, and record what has been accomplished in that time.

And first, with regard to the church fabrics. Some churches, we know, have been closed, and some dismantled. It has always been with regret that such a course has been taken, and in some cases churches that are really not required for the districts in which they are placed have been preserved and used for occasional services. On the other hand, no less than nine new churches have been built. These are :—the Church of Foyran, built by subscription, and consecrated in 1876 ; the Church of Shannon Bridge, in the Parish of Clonmacnoise, built by Captain Charles Dunne, with some help from the parishioners and others, and consecrated in 1877 ; the Chapel of Moydrum, built by Lord Castlemaine, and consecrated in 1879 ; the Church of Moyliscar, built by Mrs. Tottenham, consecrated in

1880; The Church of Durrow, built by the Honourable Otway Fortescue Toler, consecrated in 1881; the Church of Syddan, built by funds bequeathed by Miss Elizabeth Ball, and consecrated in the same year; the Church of Lynally, built by the bequest of Captain Howard Bury, and the gift of his wife Lady Emily Bury, consecrated in 1887; the Church of Donaghpatrick, built by Mr. Thomas Gerrard, and his sisters, Mrs. Collins and Mrs. Johnston, consecrated in 1897; and the Church of Skryne, built by Sir John Dillon, Bart., with some help from the parishioners, and consecrated in 1904. These are for the most part buildings of great beauty—some of them small, but all of them adequate for the wants of the districts in which they are placed.

As to the other churches, it would be impossible now to record how much has been done in the way of restoration, and merely to enumerate the buildings which have been renewed would be to give a list which would include almost every church in the diocese. The old square pews, which were at once unsightly and inconvenient, have so completely disappeared, that many in the rising generation can have no idea of the arrangements that were to be found nearly everywhere in the days of their elders.

Before disestablishment the repairs of churches were executed chiefly by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and it was feared by many that when the expense of supporting the ministry was thrown upon the people, it would put such a tax on their energies that the church fabrics would inevitably be neglected. The result has shown that this was by no means the case. As soon as parishioners felt that they were themselves responsible for the care of their churches, they rose well to the occasion, and spared neither

expense nor trouble in preserving and beautifying their sanctuaries.

Turning now to the finances of the Church, the record of the diocese for the past thirty-seven years has been remarkable indeed. From the first a large and yearly increasing sum had to be paid for the support of the ministry and of the various organizations connected with the Church. Not only has this been met, but a large sum has been laid by, the interest on which is available for carrying on the work. There is a prevalent idea that the greater part of the capital which the Church has saved is due to the liberal terms obtained under the Irish Church Act. That a considerable sum has been gained in this way has already been shown, though it is to be remembered, as has also been pointed out, that the arrangement was as advantageous to the government as it was to the Church. It may be well, however, taking Meath again as our example, to show how much of the capital is due not to the financial operations of the Representative Church Body in dealing with commutation capital, but to the generosity of the Church members, who contributed year by year to the building up of the diocesan funds. Taking the balance-sheet of the Diocese of Meath for the year 1905, and excluding all sums which have been derived directly or indirectly from the concessions made in the Irish Church Act, we have the following items :—

	£	s.	d.
Parochial Endowments, contributed since the passing of the Disendowment Bill	54,587	4	2
Half the Composition Endowments, which had to be subscribed in each case	16,635	12	11
Episcopal Endowment, excluding Composition Balance of Bishop Butcher	26,170	0	0
Stipend Fund No. 1, excluding Composition Balances	92,573	15	9
Supplemental Fund	304	6	9
Stipend Fund No. 2, excluding Composition Balances	1,778	3	5

	£	s.	d.
Diocesan Endowment Fund	2,079	6	4
Poor Parish Fund	890	5	7
Cairnes Fund	2,870	18	9
Bolton Fund	3,731	14	10
Morgan Fund	9,767	6	8
Paid for purchase of Glebes	24,237	12	9
Widows and Orphans Fund	788	9	2
Superannuation Fund	7,072	0	0
See House	1,577	8	4
	£245,064	5	5

This large sum altogether arises from the contributions of the churchmen of the diocese, and it tells us how nobly they have risen to their responsibilities. This does not include Mr. Coote's bequest, nor certain sums contributed for endowment of various parishes, which are not vested in the Representative Church Body. If these be taken into account, the amount would scarcely fall short of £300,000.

Nor is the spirit of liberality dead. Another of the fears which timorous souls expressed was that when the generation passed away who had witnessed disestablishment, their successors would not have the same enthusiasm, nor be so ready to make sacrifices on behalf of the Church. That this fear, too, is groundless is shown by the response which has just been made to the appeal of the Representative Church Body for an Auxiliary Fund, which is to cover loss resulting from the reinvestment of money that had been lent on mortgage. To that appeal, Meath has already promised a contribution of £22,861, and in this liberality has surpassed every diocese in Ireland.

While thus providing for the work of God within her own borders, and for the general necessities of the Church at home, the diocese has not been unmindful of other claims, but contributes a sum of over £2,000 a year to missions and charities. Of late years

missionary conferences and missionary exhibitions have been held in various centres, and those who are so faithful to their own Church have shown that they have sympathy also with the Church abroad, and are ready to support those who are engaged in the glorious work of extending the Kingdom of Christ.

There is, unfortunately, a reverse side to the picture which cannot be left out of sight. The Church population of the diocese has decreased and is still decreasing to an alarming extent. Since the days of disestablishment one-third of our Church people have left the diocese. We see the result in diminished congregations, in schools closed, or kept open with difficulty, and with an attendance barely sufficient to satisfy the requirements of the National Board. It becomes increasingly difficult to have efficient parish organizations, and in some parishes the smallness of the number who gather together for worship on Sundays must have a depressing effect alike on minister and on the congregation. One of the causes is the tendency, which shows itself in the rural parts of England as well as in Ireland, of the population to leave the country districts and flock into the towns. Another is the abandonment of tillage, and the turning of large tracts of land into grazing farms, thus requiring less labour. These are causes which are not peculiar to our island, but are felt all over the kingdom. But there are besides causes which are peculiar to Ireland. The tide of emigration to America and the British colonies has swept away many of our people. Then, the tendency of recent legislation and of the new land laws is more and more oppressive to land owners, and is every day loosening the ties which bind them to their ancestral homes. Altogether the outlook is not promising. We can solace ourselves that the loss to the diocese

is not a loss to the Church, for those who have left us have brought to their new homes the religion which they learnt at home, and in the far-off west, or in Africa or Australia, they still continue in the good old way; but this thought, though it may comfort us, does not make the work here at home less difficult. Yet we must not grow weary in the work, for those who are still left to us require the more care and encouragement as we see them bereft of the support which numbers can give. This, however, is our great difficulty, and in view of it we can only pray for God's grace, that we may not become weary in well-doing.

After all, though we have this discouragement, we have, as has been pointed out, many things to encourage us, and as we look forward we know that in the history of a country events never stand still, and therefore we may rest assured that the present conditions will not always continue. One thing we learn from the history that has just been recounted, that the pessimists who foreboded disaster have always been wrong; and if we keep this in mind it will give us courage for the future. God has not preserved us through so many vicissitudes, and saved us through so many dangers, merely that in the end we should fail from lack of numbers. We may rest assured that He has a work in store for the Church in Meath, and in the meantime we must simply wait in patience, faithfully performing the present duty that He gives us, and ready, whenever the call comes from Him, to rise to higher responsibilities.

APPENDIX.



APPENDIX.

I.

Church Plate.

The churches in the Diocese of Meath are, for the most part, well provided with suitable vessels for the celebration of the Holy Communion. Except in a few instances, they are of silver, and many of them are both interesting and valuable. Although the author cannot write as an expert on this subject, he trusts that a short description of some of the most interesting of these vessels will not be unacceptable to the reader.

It is possible that the oldest piece of silver in possession of the diocese is the small chalice, still in use in the parish of Mayne. It has evidently been often repaired, and the cup seems to be of much later date than the base. On neither is there any hall mark, but, judging from the shape of the base, it may be of pre-Reformation date. After the fourteenth century the foot of the chalice was made hexagonal in plan, so that the cup might not roll when laid on its side to drain after it had been rinsed out. After the Reformation the shape was changed, so that the new Communion Cup might bear no resemblance to the old "Massing Chalice," and it then assumed the form with which we are so familiar in most of our churches.[1] If the Mayne Chalice were modern, we might not be justified in thus arguing as to its age, for the tendency of later times is to return to ancient models; but in its present form it manifestly belongs to a time

[1] *Encyclopædia Britannica.*

when no such tendency had shown itself, and hence we may probably affirm that, in part, this chalice is the oldest vessel that we possess.

There is a somewhat similar chalice at Athlone, which has the inscription, "Ex dono Mariae Dodwell, unoris Henrici Dodwell, S.T.D."; and on the base, "For Saint Mary's Church of Athlone," with the words added, "Renovatus a Robert Handcock, D.D., 1815." Here again the same explanation is possible, that the base is of greater age than the cup. The Doctor Henry Dodwell here commemorated was one of Cromwell's preachers, and his name will be found in the list already given. But at the Restoration he seems to have been dispossessed, for we find that in 1661 John Stevens was appointed to the Vicarage of Athlone and Rectory of Ballyloughloe, and three years later paid first fruits for these two parishes, as well as for the parishes of Kilcleagh, Drumraney, Gallen, and Rynagh. He was, it may be noted in passing, father to the founder of Stevens' Hospital, in Dublin. This raises a question as to the position which Dodwell held. Although one of Cromwell's preachers, his degree shows that he must have been in Holy Orders, and, therefore, might have continued in the incumbency, as did many others. Possibly he may have died about the time of the Restoration, as it is not without significance that the chalice is presented not by him, but by his wife.

There is besides at Athlone a paten, probably also of the seventeenth century. It has no inscription. The other plate is interesting, though not so old. The flagon is large, and seems to have had at one time somewhat hard usage. The lower part is much crushed, and the lid, which was originally attached by a hinge, appears to have been taken off roughly with a chisel. The hall-marks are not legible. The inscription reads: "The gift of Henry St. George, brother to Arthur St. George, Esq., to the Parish and Parish Church of St. Mary, Athlone, Anno 1702, The Revd. Edward Wallen being Rector." There is also a large flat paten, of the same date, with the inscription: "Ex dono Francisci Lambert ad usum Ecclesiae St. Mariae, Athlone, 22 Junij 1702." Athlone also possesses a large heavy alms dish, with the inscription:

"The gift of Henry St. George, Esqr., to St. Marye Church in Athlone."

The church of Eglish has an old paten, which bears on the back the date 1559. On the front it has the inscription: "Ye Church at Eglish, 1775." There is no hall-mark. The curate in charge informs me that he has shown it to a friend who is somewhat of an expert, and that he thinks that it was very probably made in the year 1559, and given to Eglish in 1775. If this surmise be correct, it is the oldest dated piece of plate that we possess. The same church has a flagon which is somewhat remarkable. It is nine inches high, like a tankard, with a lid attached by a hinge, and a handle at one side. The bottom is of oak. The rural dean remarks, "It is doubtful if this is an ecclesiastical vessel at all. It is like an old pewter pot in shape." Very probably it was not originally intended for church use, for in those old days they frequently employed vessels that we would not now consider suitable for the service of the Holy Communion. The chalice and paten formerly belonging to the disused church of Knockmark are held on loan by this parish. The chalice is inscribed: "This Chalice and Stand belong to the Parish Church of Knockmark, 1819." The paten has, "This Stand and Chalice belong to the Parish Church of Knockmark 1819." The peculiar use of the word "stand" is worthy of notice.

There is in the parish of Durrow a chalice, which, from the hall-marks, appears to be of the date 1632 or 1633. The Rev. S. de C. Williams writes concerning it, "It has the letters B.T. rather coarsely but deeply cut on it, almost obliterating some letters finely engraved, which look like F.G. From a comparison between the two inscriptions, it only requires a slight effort of the imagination to think of B.T. as a vulgar upstart, who thought he could take the place of a man of culture and refinement by seeking to obliterate his initials by putting his own over them. Beneath this double pair of initials are the letters C.M., engraved in the same way as the letters, which I think are F.G. The silver in this chalice is still fairly thick, but the hall-mark was stamped so deeply in it on the

outside that it is now appearing on the inside." Durrow has also a silver flagon, with the inscription: "This piece of plate was given by Mrs. Francis Fox for the use of the Parish Church of Durrow, Anno. Dom. 1732;" a paten, which has engraved on it, "The Gift of Francis Fox of Durrow to the Parish Church;" and a second paten, "Presented to Durrow Church by Toler R. Garvey, 23rd June, 1881."

It would appear that the rebellion of 1641, followed by the usurpation of Cromwell, caused most of the old church plate to be lost. The Protector, we know, seized it wherever he could, and melted it down for coinage. It need not surprise us, therefore, to find that most of our silver is of subsequent date to those events. The chalice of Killucan has the London hall-mark of 1663, and is still in perfect condition. It has the inscription, "Parrish of Killuquen Cupp 1664. GW : AD : Churchwardens." The same parish has also a large silver paten, "The Gift of Mrs. Jane Nugent of Clonlost to the Parish Church of Killukan, December the 9th, 1742." It has the Dublin hall-mark of 1734-5.

In Kells there is a chalice and paten which, according to the Dublin hall-mark, were made in 1663. The chalice has the inscription on the cup, "Hoc Poculum Pertinet Ad Ecclesiam Parochialem Sancti Columbae de Kells 1665," and on the base, "Donum Ambrosij Iones S.T.D. Archdiaconi Midensis." The paten has "Ecclesiae de Kells 1665." There is also a large paten or alms dish—it would be large for the former, but small for the latter—with the inscription, "Ecclesia de Kells, A.D. 1671." Archdeacon Ambrose Jones, who seems to have been the donor of all three, was one of Cromwell's preachers, but managed to adapt himself to the varying opinions of the time, and so held possession of the living after the Restoration. He became Bishop of Kildare in 1667, but does not seem to have vacated Kells until 1678, when he was succeeded by another of the same family, William Jones. Kells has also a very handsome flagon, which, with a second chalice and paten, were presented by Archdeacon Lewis. On the flagon is engraved "I.H.S. In Usum Ecclesiae Xti Apud

Kells. Deo O. M. D.D.A. Georgius Lewis, Archdiaconus Meidensis. Anno 1724." The Chalice has, "In usum Ecclesiae Christi apud Kells. Deo O. M. D.D.D. Georgius Lewis, Archdiaconus Meidensis. 1727." The paten has simply the letters I.H.S. with a cross enclosed in halo. There are, besides, two collecting plates, with a dove engraved, evidently in reference to the founder of the church, St. Columba, and around it the words, "For the Church of Kells, May the 8th, 1738." All these are of English plate.

The church of Clonard has a chalice presented in 1677, and repaired in 1796. It has two inscriptions recording these facts. "Ex dono Susanna Loftus, April 15th, anno 1677;" and "Renew'd by Lady Jane Loftus, June 22nd, 1796." The hall-mark is of the date 1795, showing that the cup is of later date than the base. There is also a paten, with the inscription, "The Gift of Lettice Loftus to ye Church of Clonard 1718."

The old plate of Athboy dates from 1678, and is in bad condition. An electro-plate set is in ordinary use. The old chalice gives the name of the vicar, Robert Parkinson, and of the churchwardens, Thomas Bligh and Robert Pame, with the date. It was evidently repaired at a later date, for it has also the names of John Hopkins and Thomas Tandy, churchwardens, 1749. The paten has no inscription.

In Skryne there is a chalice and paten, both of which bear the same inscription: "This was dedicated to the Church of Skriene by the Honourable Mrs. Mary Dillon, May 30th, 1680." There is also in the same parish a fine silver flagon, and a large paten or alms dish.

The old chalice of Loughcrew has already been noticed. It bears the inscription "Die In Usum Eccliae De Loughcrew in Com Miden Dicavit Ric Dudell Vic. Anno Dom 1683. The same parish has an old silver paten, and three plated chalices, two of them dated 1843; the third without date.

The parish of Almoritia has some beautiful and valuable plate. The oldest is the chalice and paten, which are inscribed, "The Gift of L. M. E. to the Parish of Rathcondra, 1691." The flagon has "The

Gift of Lewis Meares, Senr., Esqr., and Elizabeth his wife to ye Parish Church of Rathconrath, 1698." Like many other flagons, it has a whistle at the end of the handle, which would seem to show that it was not originally intended for church use. There is a second paten of somewhat later date, "The Gift of John Meares, Esqr., to the Parish of Almoritia, 16 Sepr., 1763." They have also a curious silver gilt chalice, with cover, which seems to represent a pine-apple. Quite lately a pocket Communion Service has been presented to the parish, for use in the visitation of the sick. It consists of glass bottle with silver top, paten and chalice, and has the inscription, "The Gift of Kate Devenish Meares, Almoritia, 1904."

Galtrim Church has a paten with the inscription, "Golthrim Church, 1686." Reference has already been made to the curious cocoanut chalice which, in 1733, belonged to this parish. It may, perhaps, be assumed that it fell out of use in 1766, for in that year a silver chalice, still in use, was presented, "The Gift of Mrs. Warren, senr., to the Church of Galtrim." Laracor, with which Galtrim is united, has two chalices and a paten of eighteenth century silver. One of the chalices has the inscription, "The Gift of Garrot Wesley, Esqr., To ye Church of Larracor, 1723." This, as will be noted, was presented to the parish during the incumbency of Dean Swift.

The chalice and paten of Ratoath date from 1693. Both have the same inscription, "The Gift of Kathern and Dorcas Bolton to the Parish Church of Ratoath on Easter Sunday 1693." The Boltons lived at that time at Lagore, and for close on a hundred years the rectory was held by members of this family. Henry Bolton was appointed in 1677; he was succeeded in 1688 by Doctor John Bolton, who resigned in 1720, and was followed by Richard Bolton, who continued in the incumbency until his death in 1761. The three incumbencies thus fall short by six years of the century. The flagon was presented during the last of these three incumbencies, and was "The Gift of Mrs. Sarai Norman to the Church of Ratoath, A.D. 1743." A member of the Norman family, Thomas Lee Norman, succeeded to the rectory in 1761, being presented by

the "true and undoubted patron," Mr. Thomas Bolton, of Lagore. Belonging to the same union is some valuable but more modern plate: a chalice and paten, dated 1716, belonging to the church of Kilmoon; and a chalice and paten, dated 1776, belonging to Kilbrew. The two latter are inscribed, "The Gift of Ham Gorges, Esq., to the Church of Kilbrew, April 11th, 1776."

When the church of Kilmore was closed, the plate was sent for custody to the Representative Church Body, and was by them entrusted on loan to the Warden of Wilson's Hospital, for use in the chapel of that institution. It consists of a chalice and paten, both of which bear the same inscription, "Parish of Kilmore, June ye 6th, 1698." There have been added, round the inside of the base of the chalice, and on the under side of the paten, the words, "In usum Ecclesiae Wilson's Hospital. Hill Wilson White, S.T.D., Custos A.S. MDCCCC." The warden informs me that "the handsome silver Communion vessels belonging to the chapel of Wilson's Hospital were stolen some forty years ago." Wilson's Hospital also possesses a modern paten, which is thus described: "It has rim chased with oak leaves between four Maltese crosses. The centre is depressed, and bears the Sacred Monogram I.H.S. It is supported on an hexagonal stem, divided into two portions by embossed knob, and rests upon a hexagonal foot." It has the inscription, "A.M.D. Hanc Patinam fieri fecit H. W. White, S.T.D., Custos, in usum Ecclesiae Wilson's Hospital. A.S. MDCCCXCI." There is also a silver and glass cruet flagon, inscribed, "A.M.D.G. In usum Ecclesiae Wilson's Hospital. D.D. H. W. W. MDCCCXCI."

There are a chalice and paten at Trim, which are interesting on account of having been presented to the parish by Bishop Dopping. They both have the inscription, "The Gift of Anthony J., Bp. of Meath, To ye Church of Trymm 1696." It will be remembered that the bishop was rector of Trim. This arrangement was first made under Bishop Montgomery, but the rectory was not finally appropriated by letters patent until 1648, when it was so granted to Bishop Dopping. Lord Drogheda makes sarcastic reference to this fact in the extraordinary letter which has been already

quoted. There is a second chalice, "The Gift of Mrs Mary Lightbourne and Mrs. Jane Lloyd to St. Patrick's Church of Trymm;" and a second paten, "The Gift of Mrs. Mary Lightbourne and Mrs. Jane Lightbourne to St. Patrick's Church of Trymm." The Lightbournes were long connected with the Parish of Trim, and one of the family became curate to Dean Swift at Laracor. The rest of the Trim plate was presented by Dean Butler. It consists of a flagon and two alms dishes. The flagon was presented in 1855, and commemorates that Dean Butler had then been Vicar of Trim for thirty-five years; the alms dishes were presented, one at Whitsuntide, 1855, and the other at Easter, 1859.

The Parish of Raddonstown has a chalice and paten, presented to the church in 1697, by Mr. William Connalle. The silver chalice and paten belonging to Moyglare, in the same union, is modern.

Some eighteenth century and more modern plate has been already noted; for the rest, it may suffice to mention only those which have more or less interesting inscriptions.

In Ballyloughloe there is a chalice and paten, "The Gift of the Revd. Robert Smyth, late Vicar of Ballyloughloe, July, 1706." There is also a small chalice, "From Lord Sunderlin to the Parishioners of the Parish of Drumreny;" another paten, "The Gift of the Revd. John Travers, Vicar of Ballyloughloe. Feb. 9, 1775;" and a small paten, which has the inscription, "In usum Infirmorum Dedicavit Johannes Travers Vicarius De Ballyloughloe."

In the Union of Moynalty, the chalice and paten of Newtown date from 1709. The Church of Moynalty itself has a chalice with the inscription, "Ex dono Johannis Chaloner, An. Dom. 1714 & Georgij Regis Primo." There is also a paten dated 1724.

The old Communion plate of Kingscourt consists of one chalice and two plates. It has the following inscription: "The gift of Mrs. Elizabeth Pratt and of her only child Mervyn Pratt, Esq., to the Parish Church of Enniskeen, County of Cavan, 1710." Beneath this is a cross and the monogram, I.H.S. A beautiful new service, consisting of two chalices and

a flagon, was presented to this parish by Mr. J. Pratt in 1905.

The chalice of Dunshaughlin is without hall-mark or date, and should probably be placed much higher up in our list. It is very light, and of dark silver, and has the inscription, "C. of donsaghlin." The oldest dated plate belonging to the parish is a small paten, "The gift of Henry Webb, Esq., to ye Parish Church of Dunsaghlin. Anno 1711." Noah Webb, Dean of Leighlin, was incumbent of this parish from 1692 to 1696. Doubtless the Henry Webb here commemorated was a member of his family. The flagon belonging to this church is inscribed, "Dunsaghlin Church. Anno 1719." Of the other churches in this union, Ballymaglasson has a chalice and paten dated 1812. Rathbeggan has electroplate.

In Castlelost the chalice and paten are inscribed, "The Gift of Mdme Hannah Rochfort to the Church of Castle Loss in Westmeath, 1712." The Rochforts, as we have already learned, were munificent benefactors of this parish. The flagon is modern silver. Of the other churches in the union, Moyliscar has a silver chalice, of which I have not been able to ascertain the date. Enniscoffy has flagon, chalice, and paten, dated 1892.

The Stackallen plate consists of flagon, chalice, and paten. All of them have the same inscription, "The Honble Frek. Hamilton, Esqr. Eccles ye 7, verse ye 1st. Chap. ye 1st, verse ye 7th. He died 10ber ye 10th, 1715, & is buried in ye Parish Church of Stackallen." In the centre is engraved a skull and cross bones. The silver belonging to Paynestown is not particularly interesting. It consists of a flagon and paten (the chalice and another paten is electroplate). There is also a silver alms dish, "Presented to Painstown Church in loving memory of Arthur George Murray and his dear Wife Eliza Knight Murray, by their sorrowing sons and daughters, 1897." The text is added, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

The plate belonging to Kilbeggan Church is handsome and valuable. It is all of heavy silver. The oldest piece is the paten, which has the inscription,

"The Gift of Brabazon Newcomen to ye Church of Kilbegan, 1717. Enlarged by ye Parish 1750." Next comes the chalice, which is "The Gift of Brabazon Newcomen, Esq., to the Church of Kilbeggan, 1723." There is also a flagon, "The Gift of Lieut. Col. Lambart to the Church of Kilbeggan, 1754;" and an alms dish, "The Gift of Charles Lambart to the Parish of Killbeggan, 1768." It will be noticed that in many of the inscriptions that have been quoted, the spelling of the names of parishes is peculiar. One would have thought that in the case of Kilbeggan there would be little room for variation, but we find that the name is spelled in three different ways on these vessels. The parish of Ardnurcher, in the same union, has only plated vessels, formerly belonging to Lynally. Some years ago the silver belonging to this parish was stolen by burglars, who broke open the church. The probability is that it was melted down by them, and therefore can never be recovered.

In the parish of Rynagh (Banagher) there is an interesting chalice and paten, both of which bear the inscription, "Ex Dono piissimee Anae Baronissae de Louth Ecclesiae Parochiali de Reynah Diocesi Medensi. Anno 1719." There is also a large silver paten, dated 1815.

In Delvin there is a chalice with cover, bearing the inscription, "The Gift of the Rev. Samuel Hodson to ye Parish of Delvin, being Vicar Thereof, A.D. 1720." Also a silver paten bearing the Fitzgerald crest. Killallon, with which Delvin is united, has flagon, chalice, and paten, inscribed, "The Gift of the Rev. Jeremy Walsh, decd., near 60 years Vicar of Killallon, 1789." It would appear that in 1825 there were two chalices, but if so, one of them has been lost.

Forgney possesses an interesting chalice, "The Free Gift of Freke Sandys, Esqr., to the Church of Forgney, Anno Domini 1722." Also a paten, "The Gift of the Rev. Dean Harman To the Parish Church of Forgney, 1770;" and a flagon of modern plate which was presented by Mrs. Frances Harman. It has an alms dish, "In Memory of the Right Honourable Colonel E. R. King Harman, M.P., who died June

1888;" and a paten, which was the gift of the Rev. J. H. Rice in 1895.

The parish of Ballymore has a chalice which dates from 1723. It is inscribed, "The guift of the Parishrs of Ballymore. Ye Revd. Wm. Piers, Minister. George Lennon and John Dawson, Churchwardens. 1723." This was one of the parishes which were appropriate to the see. Accordingly we find that, in 1734, the bishop presented a flagon and paten. The flagon bears the inscription, "D.O.M. In usum Ecclesia Parochialis de Ballymore in Diocesi Midensi Rite Reverendus Arthurus Divina Providentia Midensis Episcopus Hanc Langenam. D.D.C." The paten bears the same inscription, substituting the word "Patinam" for "Langenam."

The Newtown Fertullagh Plate is old, and the chalice and paten are worn very thin, indeed worn through in places. The hall-marks are not decipherable, but the date may be fixed approximately by the inscription on chalice and paten: "This belongeth to Newtown Fertullagh Church in ye Diocese of Meath. John Shadwell, M.A., Rector." Shadwell vacated the parish in 1724. There is also a flagon, which was "The bequest of the late Barry Lowe of Newtown, Esq., 1781."

The chalice of Syddan was "The Gift of David Nixon to the Church of Syddan, A.D. 1731." The paten was acquired when the Rev. Brabazon Disney was vicar. He was appointed in 1788.

A chalice and paten at Tisaran dates from 1735. Two brass alms dishes were lately presented to this church, bearing the inscription, "A Thankoffering for God's protecting Care, the 2nd July, 1905." They were presented by a young lady in the parish who had a narrow escape from drowning.

Ardbraccan has been for many centuries the residence of the Bishops of Meath. Naturally, therefore, the handsome and valuable Communion vessels were episcopal gifts. A chalice and paten were presented by Bishop Maule in 1744, and a flagon, chalice, paten, and alms dish were given by Bishop Henry Maxwell in 1782.

Agher has a chalice presented by Hercules Langford

Rowley in 1747; also a flagon and two patens.

Drumcree has a chalice and paten presented by Thomas Smyth in 1752.

Dunboyne has for paten an ordinary sideboard salver, with three legs, dated 1763; also an old chalice; and a very fine flagon, deposited, at present with the Representative Church Body.

The chalice of Tara dates from 1755; the flagon and paten from 1766.

The church plate of Saint Mary's, Drogheda, dates from 1767. The flagon and paten have the inscription, "In usum Ecclesiae B. Mariae de ponte piorum munificentia. A.D. 1767." The chalice has "Ecclesiae Beatae Mariae de ponte Gulielmus Graves Armiger. A.D. 1767." The silver vessels at Colpe were presented by Mr. William P. Cairnes in 1904. They have also an electroplate chalice and paten, given to the parish in 1815 by Mr. Henry Smith.

Taughmon Church has chalice and paten dated 1770. The Portnashangan plate dates from 1823. This parish has also a small set of sacred vessels for use in the visitation of the sick.

The Kentstown chalice is the gift of the Rev. J. Ball, who was appointed rector in 1786. All the other vessels are electroplate.

The Mullingar plate dates from 1791, and consists of two chalices and two patens. They have also two electroplate flagons of the same date and a small service for use in the visitation of the sick, which was acquired in 1902.

The silver chalice at Clonfadforan is dated 1794. There is also a silver flagon which was "A Gift from the Countess of Belvidere to the Church of Tyrrelspass, June 25th, 1825."

Of early nineteenth century plate, which has not been already noticed, it may suffice to refer to the chalice of Kilshine, presented by the Rev. Mungo Noble in 1802, and another chalice, presented to the same parish by Mr. John Pollock in 1815; the chalice and paten of Leney, "Dedicated to God, and for the use of the Church of Leney, by Alexander Murray, Esq., Mount Murray, 1808;" the flagon, chalice, and paten of Kilnegarenagh, which was "The gift

of Thomas Homan Mulock, Esq., of Bellair, to the Church of Liss, 1811;" the large and handsome vessels belonging to Tullamore, which were acquired in the early part of the century; and the flagon, chalice, and paten of Killochonnigan, which were "The Gift of Elizabeth, Countess of Darnley, 1823." The paten of Drakestown, dated 1817, and the chalice and alms dish belonging to the same parish, and dated 1824. Mention may also be made of a chalice at Julianstown, with the inscription, "For the use of the Parish of Gillingstown;" and of another at Kilkenny West, "The Gift of Captain Richard Newstead to ye Church of Kilkenny West." Both of these are doubtless much older than those we are now noticing, but as the plate marks are absent or undecipherable, the date cannot be fixed.

Three sets of more modern plate deserve special mention. First, the chalice, flagon, and silver-mounted glass flagon of Lynally, which were presented to the church by the Countess of Charleville, when it was consecrated in 1881. In the same church there is a brass almsdish, the workmanship of the Rev. W. F. Falkiner, Rector of Killucan, by whom it was presented to the Parish. It is a very handsome and beautiful piece of beaten brass work, and bears the inscription "ΙΑΑΡΟΝ ΔΟΤΗΝ ΑΓΑΠΑ Ο ΘΕΟΣ." Then, the very beautiful and costly set, consisting of a flagon, two chalices, and a paten, presented by the Rev. Francis Swift, afterwards Dean of Clonmacnoise, to the Parish of Kilbixey, of which he was then rector; and, lastly, the flagon, chalice, and paten, presented in 1891 to the Parish of Donaghpatrick by Mr. Thomas Gerrard.

There is, besides, a good deal of electroplate, but for the most part of no particular interest. Special mention need only be made of the chalice and two patens belonging to Nobber. These were presented by Bishop Henry Maxwell, who was rector of the parish, in 1792, but for many years they were lost and fogotten. A short time ago they were brought to Mr. Wilkinson of Navan, who purchased them, and restored them to the parish. Before being handed over to the rector, they were renewed and replated

at the expense of Sir John Dillon, Bart. They are now in regular use at the celebration of Holy Communion. They bear the inscription, "The Gift of the Right Honble. and Revd. Henry Lord Bishop of Meath to the Church of Nobber. A.D. 1792. Samuel Murphy, Curate. Francis Hopkins, Joseph Russell, Churchwardens. Lost for many years. Restored A.D. 1907."

The only pewter vessel remaining seems to be a chalice at Almoritia. There are, however, pewter collecting plates at Ballyboy, Enniskeen, Moate, Mount Nugent, Kilmainham Wood, Loughan, Moyglare, Kilnegarenagh, Tisaran, and Durrow.

Many parishes still possess the old copper collecting boxes, with long handles, which are sometimes irreverently referred to as "warming pans." In most cases they have quite gone out of use, and are preserved merely as curiosities. It is to be feared that many will be lost, unless some means are taken for their preservation. It is not likely that they will ever again come into use, but, having been once employed in the service of the Church, they ought to be rescued from the fate of the rubbish heap.

Some plate has been lost, it is to be feared, through the carelessness of the custodians. We have already referred to the cases of Ardnurcher and Wilson's Hospital. In Ratoath they had two silver collecting plates in 1825; there is only one at present. At Clonmellon a chalice is missing which was there in 1825. In Duleek, the "cup, chalice, and paten in good order," which were there in 1825, have disappeared, and their place is taken by poor electroplate, acquired in 1827. In Slane they had two silver cups in 1825, and both of them seem to have disappeared. These are the only cases of loss that I can trace; and, when we remember that such valuable possessions were often left to the care of sextons, we can only wonder that the loss has been so small.

II.

BISHOPS OF MEATH.

From the Date of the Synod of Kells (1152).

At the Synod of Kells, as we have already seen, the various small dioceses in the district were consolidated, and formed into one whole Diocese of Meath. This may, therefore, be taken as the proper time from which to trace the succession of bishops.

1152. Eleutherius O'Meehan held the See of Clonard at the time of the Synod of Kells. He died in 1174.

1174. Eugene succeeded, and assumed the title of Bishop of Meath.

1194. Simon Rochfort was the first Englishman preferred to the See. He was consecrated in 1194, and died in 1224. He changed the Episcopal seat from Clonard to Newtown near Trim.

1224. Deodatus, elected by the clergy of Meath, but, according to some, died, before his consecration, in 1226.

1227. Ralph le Petit, had been Archdeacon of Meath, and was elected in 1227. He was a very old man, and only survived his elevation until 1230.

1232. Richard de la Corner, or Nangle, a canon of St. Patrick's, Dublin, was consecrated in St. Peter's, Drogheda, in 1232. He died in 1250.

1250. Geoffrey Cusack is not generally counted among the Bishops of Meath, as there was a long continued contest about the election. It seems clear, however, that he was actually consecrated, and held the See for some time.

1255. Hugh de Taghmon, "a pious man of a venerable life," was the rival of Geoffrey Cusack. As late as 1255 he is spoken of as "bishop elect," and sometime after this was consecrated. He was made Lord High Treasurer of Ireland by King Henry III. He died in 1281, and was buried at Mullingar.

1287. Thomas St. Leger was elected in 1282, but was not consecrated until 1287, when he was raised to the episcopate at Kilkenny, John de Sandfort, Archbishop of Dublin, and Roger, Bishop of Ossory, being consecrated the same day. He died in 1320.

1321. John O'Carrol, was consecrated Bishop of Cork in 1302, and succeeded to Meath, by the Pope's provision, in 1321. He was translated to the Archbishopric of Cashel in 1327.

1327. William de Paul, sometime Provincial of the Order of the Carmelites, was consecrated at Avignon in 1327. He died in 1349.

1350. William St. Leger, Archdeacon of Meath, was elected by the synod of the clergy, and then appointed by the Pope's provision, which ignored the election. He was consecrated by the Bishop of Winchester, and died two years later, in 1352.

1353. Nicholas Allen, Abbot of St. Thomas's, Dublin, was consecrated in 1353, and died in 1366. He was appointed Treasurer of Ireland in 1357.

1369. Stephen de Valle, was consecrated Bishop of Limerick in 1360, and was from thence translated to Meath in 1369. He died at Oxford in 1397, and was buried there. He was for a time Treasurer of Ireland.

1380. William Andrew, consecrated Bishop of Aghadoe in 1374, and translated to Meath in 1380. He died in 1385.

1386. Alexander Petit, or De Balscot, became Bishop of Ossory in 1371, and was translated to Meath in 1386, at the request of the clergy of the diocese. He died at Ardbraccan in 1400, and was buried at Trim.

1402. Robert Mountain, Rector of Kildalkey, was appointed Bishop of Meath by the Pope's provision. There was some delay in his consecration, as King Henry IV. wished to promote his own confessor, Robert Mascal. Mountain, however, was consecrated in 1402, and sat until his death in 1412.

1413. Edward Dantsey, Archdeacon of Cornwall, was appointed in 1413, and held the See until his death in 1429. He was High Treasurer of Ireland, and for a time Deputy to the Lord Lieutenant.

1430. William Hadsor was appointed by the Pope in 1430. On the death of Bishop Dantsey, Thomas Scurlock, Prior of Newtown, seems to have been elected, but he failed to obtain confirmation of his election from the Pope. Hadsor only survived until 1334.

1434. William Silk, Rector of Killeen, was appointed by the General Council of Basil in 1434. He died at Ardbraccan in 1450, and was buried at Killeen, where his tomb may still be seen in the ruined church.

1450. Edmund Ouldhall, A Carmelite of Norwich, succeeded in 1450. He died, and was buried at Ardbraccan in 1459.

1460. William Sherwood was appointed by the Pope in 1460. He was for a time Deputy to the Lord Lieutenant, and afterwards Lord Chancellor of Ireland. He died at Dublin in 1482, and was buried at Newtown.

1483. John Payn succeeded in 1483, and died at Dublin in 1506. In 1496 he was appointed Master of the Rolls.

1507. William Rokeby, Vicar of Halifax, was appointed

by the Pope in 1507. He had already held the office of Lord Chancellor of Ireland. He was translated to the Archbishopric of Dublin in 1511.

1512. Hugh Inge succeeded in 1512. He was translated to Dublin in 1522.

1523. Richard Wilson was appointed in 1523, and died in 1529.

1530. Edward Staples, Commendatore of the Hospital of St. Bartholomew in London, was appointed by the Pope's provision in 1530. He was deprived by Queen Mary in 1554, and died shortly afterwards.

1554. William Walsh was appointed when Staples was deprived, but was not consecrated for some time afterwards. He was deprived by Queen Elizabeth in 1565, and for a time imprisoned. Afterwards he retired to Spain, and died there in 1577.

1563. Hugh Brady was consecrated in 1563, and died at Dunboyne in 1583. He is buried in the church of that parish.

1584. Thomas Jones, Dean of Saint Patrick's, Dublin, was consecrated in 1548. In 1605 he was translated to the Archbishopric of Dublin.

1605. Roger Dod, Dean of Shrewsbury, was appointed in 1606. He died and was buried at Ardbraccan in 1608.

1611. George Montgomery, Dean of Norwich and Chaplain to King James I., was consecrated to the Bishoprics of Derry, Raphoe, and Clogher in 1605. He was translated to Meath in 1611, the See having been some time vacant after the death of Roger Dod. He continued at the same time to hold the See of Clogher. He died in London in 1620, but was brought for burial to Ardbraccan, where his tomb may still be seen.

1621. James Ussher, Chancellor of St. Patrick's and Professor of Divinity in Trinity College, was consecrated in St. Peter's, Drogheda, in 1621. He was translated to the Archbishopric of Armagh in 1624.

1625. Anthony Martin, Dean of Waterford, Fellow of Trinity College, was consecrated in Dublin in 1625. On the usurpation of Cromwell, he left Meath, and took up his residence in Trinity College, where he died of the plague in 1650. He was buried in the College Chapel.

1660. Henry Leslie, Dean of Down and Treasurer of St. Patrick's, was consecrated Bishop of Down and Connor in 1635. He was translated to Meath in 1660, the See having then been vacant for ten years. He only survived his translation until the next year, when he died in Dublin, and was buried in Christ Church Cathedral.

1661. Henry Jones, Dean of Kilmore, was consecrated Bishop of Clogher in 1645, and was translated to Meath in 1661. He died in Dublin in 1681, and was buried in St. Andrew's Church.

1682. Anthony Dopping, Fellow of Trinity College, Rector of St. Andrew's, Dublin, was consecrated Bishop of Kildare in 1678, and was translated to Meath in 1682. He was Vice-Chancellor of the University of Dublin. He died in Dublin in 1697, and was buried in St. Andrew's Church.

1697. Richard Tennison, Vice-Chancellor of Trinity College, was consecrated Bishop of Killala in 1681, translated to Clogher in 1690, and again translated to Meath in 1697. He died in 1705.

1705. William Moreton, Dean of Christ Church, Dublin, was consecrated Bishop of Kildare in 1682, and was translated to Meath in 1705. He died in 1715.

1716. John Evans, Bishop of Bangor, was translated to Meath in 1716. He died in 1724.

1724. Henry Downes, Minister of Brington Church, Northamptonshire, was consecrated Bishop of Killala in 1717. From thence he was translated to Elphin in 1720, and from Elphin to Meath in 1724. He had yet another translation in 1727, when he left Meath and went to Derry.

1727. Ralph Lambert, Dean of Down, was consecrated Bishop of Dromore in 1717, and was translated to Meath in 1727. He died in 1732.

1732. Welbore Ellis became Bishop of Kildare in 1705, and was translated to Meath in 1732. He died in 1734.

1734. Arthur Price, Dean of Ferns, was consecrated Bishop of Clonfert in 1724. From thence he was translated to Ferns and Leighlin in 1729, and in 1734 he became Bishop of Meath. Ten years later, in 1744, he was again translated to the Archbishopric of Cashel.

1744. Henry Maule, Dean of Cloyne, was consecrated Bishop of Cloyne in 1726; he was translated to Dromore in 1732; and came to Meath in 1744. He died in 1758.

1758. The Honourable William Carmichael, Archdeacon of Bucks, was consecrated Bishop of Clonfert in 1753. From thence he went to Ferns and Leighlin in 1758, and in the same year was again translated, to Meath. In 1765 he became Archbishop of Dublin.

1765. Richard Pococke, Archdeacon of Dublin, was consecrated to the See of Ossory in 1756. He was translated to Meath in 1765, and died the same year, just as he was about to hold his first visitation.

1765. Arthur Smyth, Dean of Derry, was consecrated Bishop of Clonfert in 1752. He was translated to Down and Connor in 1753; he came to Meath in 1765, and finally was translated to Dublin in the following year.

1766. The Honourable Henry Maxwell, Dean of Kilmore, was consecrated to the Bishopric of Dromore in 1765. He was translated in the following year to Meath, which he held until his death, in 1798.

1798. Thomas Lewis O'Beirne was consecrated Bishop of Ossory in 1795, and was translated to Meath in 1798. He died in 1823.

1823. Nathaniel Alexander was consecrated Bishop of Clonfert in 1802, and translated to Killaloe in 1804; the same year he was again translated to Down and Connor, and finally became Bishop of Meath in 1823. He held the See until his death, which took place in 1840. It may be noted that no less than fourteen successive Bishops of Meath were appointed by translation, and that from the consecration of Anthony Martin in 1625 to the death of Nathaniel Alexander in 1840—a period of two hundred and fifteen years—no bishop was consecrated for the Diocese of Meath.

1840. Charles Dickenson, Chaplain of the Magdalen Asylum, Dublin, was consecrated in 1840, and died in 1842.

1842. Edward Adderly Stopford, Archdeacon of Armagh, was consecrated in 1842, and died in 1849.

1850. Thomas Stewart Townsend, Dean of Waterford, was consecrated in 1850, and died in the following year.

1852. Joseph Henderson Singer, Archdeacon of Raphoe and Regius Professor of Divinity in Trinity College, was consecrated in 1852, and died in 1866.

1866. Samuel Butcher, Regius Professor of Divinity in Trinity College, was consecrated in 1866, and died in 1876.

1876. William Conyngham Baron Plunket, Treasurer of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, was elected by the Synod of Meath on the 18th October, 1876, and was consecrated in Armagh on the 10th of December in the same year. He was translated to the Archbishopric of Dublin in 1884.

1885. Charles Parsons Reichel, Dean of Clonmacnoise, was elected by the Bench of Bishops from names sent up to them by the Diocesan Synod in 1885, and was consecrated in St. Patrick's Cathedral. He died in 1894.

1894. Joseph Ferguson Peacocke, Rector of Monkstown and Canon of St. Patrick's National Cathedral, was elected by the Bench of Bishops from names sent up by the Diocesan Synod in 1894, and was consecrated in Armagh. He was translated to Dublin in 1897.

1897. James Bennett Keene, Rector of Navan and Canon of St. Patrick's, was elected by the Bench of Bishops from names sent up by the Diocesan Synod in 1897, and was consecrated at Armagh.

The following note is appended by Bishop O'Beirne to a list of the Bishops of Meath which was drawn up by him: "The first Bishop of Meath who was admitted into the Privy Council, except in right of some great State office, was Thomas St. Leger, in the reign of

Edward the First. The next who appears to have been a Privy Counsellor, without any State office, was Edward Staples, in the reign of Edward the Sixth. The next was Thomas Jones, called into the Privy Council in consequence of instructions given by Government to Sir John Perrot in 1584. The next was James Usher, in 1621. The next Anthony Martin, in 1641. The next was Anthony Dopping, in whose patent, dated 14th of January, 1681, was inserted an unusual clause admitting him into the Privy Council. Subsequent to this period bishops called into the Privy Council, as far as I can learn, were Richard Tennison, Henry Downes, Welbore Ellis, Arthur Price, Henry Maule, William Carmichael, Henry Maxwell, Thom[illegible] Lewis O'Beirne." It may be added that Bish[illegible] O'Beirne's successors, up to the time of disestab[illegible]ment, all enjoyed the same honour.

III.

Bishops of Clonmacnoise.

The Church of Clonmacnoise was founded in 548, and it became such an important establishment that there can be little doubt but that a succession of Bishops was kept up there from the first. Only a few of the earlier names have come down to us.

Baitan, Abbot and Bishop, died 663.
Joseph de Rosmor, died in 839.
Maelodhar, died in 886.
Cairbre Crom, was bishop in 894, died in 899.
Loingseach, died in 918.
Colman, son of Ailill, died in 924.
Dunchadh, died in 940.
Dunadhach, died in 953.
Cormac O'Killeen, Abbot of Roscommon, died in 964.
Tuathal, died in 969.
Conaing O'Cosgraigh, died in 997.
Maelpoil, died in 1000.
Celechar Mughohornach, died in 1067.

Gillachrist O'Hectigern, died in 1104.
Domnald O'Dubhai, died in 1136.
Moriertach O'Melider, was present at the Synod of Kells in 1152. He died in 1188, but resigned some time before his death.
Tigernac, died in 1172.
Muirigen O'Muirigen, died in 1213.
Edan O'Maily, died in 1220.

1220. Melrony O'Modein, died in 1230.

1230. Hugh O'Malone, died in 1236, and was buried at Kilbeggan.
Elias, mentioned as predecessor of Thomas in State Papers.

1236. Thomas, Dean of Clonmacnoise, died in 1252.

1252. David O'Gillapatrick, died the same year.

1253. Thomas O'Quin, died in 1279.

1281. Gilbert, Dean of Clonmacnoise, consecrated at Armagh in 1281. He resigned in 1288.

1290. William O'Duffy, died from an accidental fall in 1297.

1297. William O'Findan, Abbot of Kilbeggan, died in 1300, after which the See was vacant for three years.

1303. Donald O'Brian, Guardian of the Minorites of Killeigh.
Lewis O'Daly, died in 1337.
Henry, died in 1367.
Richard.
Philip, died in 1338.

1390. Miles Cory, appointed by Pope Boniface IX. in 1390. He was made Lord Justice of Connaught by King Richard II.
O'Galchor, died in 1397.

1397. Philip Mangill mentioned in the *Vatican Records* as "Bishop Elect" in 1397.

1398. Peter, Abbot of Granard, died in 1411.

1411. Philip O'Mail, died in 1422.

1423. David Brendog, appointed by Pope Martin V. He held the See for only one year, when it remained vacant until 1427.

1427. Cormac M'Coghlan, Dean of Clonmacnoise, elected by the Chapter. He died in 1442.

1444. John Oldais.
John (probably not the same as John Oldais), died in 1486.

1487. Walter Blake, Canon of Annaghdown, appointed by Pope Innocent VIII. He died in 1508.

1508. Thomas.

1516. Quintin, appointed by the Pope's provision. He died in 1538.

1538. Richard Hogan, Bishop of Killaloe, was translated to Clonmacnoise in 1538, and died the same year.

1539. Florence Gerawan, appointed by the Pope's provision. He died in 1554.
1556. Peter Wall. He died in 1568, after which the See was by Act of Parliament united to Meath.

IV.

Archdeacons of Meath.

There being no cathedral in Meath, the archdeacon occupies a position corresponding to the dean in other dioceses. He has precedence before all the other clergy, and in former times was entitled to preside at the Synod of the clergy, which met yearly, on the Thursday after Pentecost. Until the time of disestablishment, the archdeaconry was united to the rectory of Kells.

11— Helias.
1190. Ralph le Petit, sometimes called Archdeacon of Mullingar.
1222. R——.
1235. Simon de Burford. Had licence from the Pope to be elected to a bishopric, although the son of a priest.
1264. Richard of Malmesbury.
1269. John de Dumbleton or Dubilton.
1289. John de Kenelve.
1295. William de Sidan.
1325. William St. Leger, appointed Bishop of Meath in 1350.
1350. Robert de Emeldon, Treasurer of Ireland.
1361. Matthew Crumpe.
1362. Adam Owen.
1369. Henry Poole.
1372. Matthew Crumpe again. There was a dispute between the King and the Bishop as to the right of presentation. Crumpe was appointed by the Crown. Hugh de St. Martial, Cardinal of St. Mary's in Porticu was also appointed by the Pope, but Crumpe held possession against him. Cardinal Hugh afterwards gave his adhesion to the Antipope Clement VII., and for this reason was dispossessed.
1374. Andrew Brandon.
1386. Thomas Sprott. The Pope appointed Landulph Cardinal Deacon of St. Nicholas in Carcere Tulliano, but Sprott opposed the provision successfully.
1388. William Carleil, one of the Barons of the Exchequer.

1400. Thomas Bathe or Bache, Chief Baron of the Exchequer and Treasurer of Ireland.
1407. William or Walter Young, Lord Chancellor of Ireland.
1450. John White.
1489. Christopher Dowdall.
1528. Christopher Dowdall.
1540. John Chambre.
1558. Robert Luttrell. Deprived by Queen Elizabeth.
1559. John Garvey, consecrated Bishop of Kilmore in 1585, and translated to Armagh in 1589, but held at the same time the Archdeaconry of Meath *in commendam*.
1603. Owen Wood.
1606. Thomas Moyne, Dean of St. Patrick's in 1608, Bishop of Kilmore in 1628.
1608. John Rider, Dean of St. Patrick's, which office he exchanged with Moyne for the Archdeaconry; Bishop of Killaloe in 1612.
1613. Randolph Barlow, Dean of Christ Church, Dublin, appointed Archbishop of Tuam in 1629, holding at the same time the archdeaconry *in commendam*.
1633. John Bramhall, Treasurer of Christ Church, appointed in 1634 Bishop of Derry, and on the Restoration raised to the Archbishopric of Armagh.
1634. Robert Ussher, Canon of St. Patrick's and Provost of Trinity College, consecrated Bishop of Kildare in 1635.
1644. Arthur Ware.
1661. Ambrose Jones, appointed Bishop of Kildare in 1667.
1678. William Jones.
1681. Henry Cottingham.
1698. James Moorecraft.
1723. George Lewis.
1730. William Smyth, Dean of Ardfert.
1732. James Smyth.
1759. Charles Stone.
1799. Thomas De Lacy.
1844. Edward Adderly Stopford.
1872. Edward Fleetwood Berry, Vicar of Trim.
1875. Charles Parsons Reichel, Dean of Clonmacnoise in 1882, consecrated Bishop of Meath in 1885.
1882. Garrett Nugent.
1898. Graham Craig.
1900. John Rennison.

V.

Deans of Clonmacnoise.

— Thomas, elected Bishop of Clonmacnoise in 1236.
— Gilbert, elected Bishop of Clonmacnoise in 1280.
— Cormac MacCoghlan, died in 1426.
— Odo O'Molan, deprived by the Primate in 1549. As no successor was appointed until 1561, the year in which he died, it would appear that the deprivation was not effective.
1561. William Flynn.
— Miler M'Clery was Dean in 1579.
1601. William Leicester.
1628. Marcus Lynch, became Prebendary of Tuam next year.
1629. Richard Price.
1633. Samuel Clarke.
1634. William Burley, Prebendary of Tipper in St. Patrick's, Dublin.
1661. John Kerdiffe, D.D., was Fellow of T.C.D.
1668. Henry Cottingham, became Archdeacon of Meath in 1681.
1681. Theophilus Harrison, Canon of Kildare.
16— Stephen Handcock, deprived under James II., but restored by King William and Queen Mary.
1697. Theophilus Harrison, probably the same as Harrison appointed in 1681. He was appointed Prebendary of Clonmethan in St. Patrick's, Dublin, in 1702, but continued to hold the Deanery until his death in 1720.
1720. Anthony Dopping, son of the Bishop of Meath, became Bishop of Ossory in 1741.
1742. John Owen, D.D., Prebendary of Christ Church, Dublin.
1761. Arthur Champagne, D.D., Prebendary of Kildare and Vicar of Mullingar.
1800. Charles Mongan Warburton, D.D., Dean of Ardagh. He was consecrated Bishop of Limerick in 1806, and in 1820 was translated to Cloyne.
1806. Thomas Vesey Dawson.
1811. Henry Roper, D.D.
1847. Richard Butler, D.D., Vicar of Trim.
1862. John Brownlow, Rector of Ardbraccan.
1882. Charles Parsons Reichel, consecrated Bishop of Meath in 1885.
1885. Francis Swifte, Rector of Mullingar.
1900. Graham Craig.
1904. Richard Stuart Dobbs Campbell, D.D., Rector of Athlone.

VI.

ARCHDEACONS OF CLONMACNOISE.

— Milo Mac Thady O'Connor, became Bishop of Elphin in 1260.
— Philip O'Dullachan, was Archdeacon in 1366.
— James MacCoghlan, son of the Bishop, was killed in 1444.
1444. Irelius O'Melachlin.
1568. Malachi Dolaghan.
1579. Ferdoragh Malone, held the Archdeaconry until 1616.
1620. Joseph or John Ankers, was Vicar of Athlone, Ballyloughloe, and Kilcleagh in 1608.
1638. Neill Molloy, Precentor of Kildare. In 1622 he is mentioned as Vicar of Fircall.
1639. Richard Lingard, Vicar of Athlone.

VII.

CANONS OF CLONMACNOISE.

1398. Bernard Ycellaydi.
— Florence O'Shruan, was a Canon in 1444.

VIII.

ARCHDEACONS OF KELLS.

The Rectory of Nobber was united to this dignity, for which reason the holder is sometimes styled "Archdeacon of Nobber."

1047. Cuduiligh.
1276. ——— Synan.
1287. Thomas St. Leger, appointed Bishop of Meath in 1287.
1315. William St. Leger.
1362. Henry Powell.
1380. Walter de Brugge.
1384. Adam Naas.
1401. The Bishop of Telese in Campania.

1418. Robert Sutton.
1423. John Stanyhurst.
1534. Charles Reynolds.
1535. Thomas Lockwood, Dean of Christ Church in 1543.
1565. Thomas Lancaster.

In 1544 the Archdeaconry of Kells was united to the Bishopric. The appointment of Thomas Lancaster in 1565 shows that the union did not become effective until some years later.

IX.

Canons of the National Cathedral of St. Patrick, Dublin.

After the disestablishment of the Church it was decided to make St. Patrick's a National Cathedral, and it was arranged that each diocese should elect a representative canon. The Prebend of Tipper was allotted to Meath; and it is interesting to note that this canonry was held in 1546 by Christopher Gaffney, Rector of Castlerickard; in 1567 by William Leech, Vicar of Dunshaughlin; in 1615 by Gilbert Purdon, Rector of Paynestown; in 1634 by William Burley, Dean of Clonmacnoise; and in 1801 by Hill Benson, who was appointed to Ballymaglasson, though he did not accept the parish.

1872. Charles Parsons Reichel, Bishop of Meath in 1885.
1885. James Bennett Keene, Bishop of Meath in 1897.
1897. John Healy.

X.

Succession of the Clergy.

Attempts have been made from time to time to draw up a list of the clergy in the several parishes in the diocese. Bishop Dopping, in one of his manuscripts, gives a few names, from which it would appear that

he had some such idea in his mind, but he does not seem to have followed it up. Archdeacon Stopford began a similar task, and made some progress; the result of his labours is contained in a book which is at present preserved in the Registry of the Diocese. The most complete list, however, is that drawn up by the late Rev. William Reynell, whose industry in all manner of research was a marvel to those who knew him. The present author, being unaware of what Mr. Reynell had done, went practically over the same ground. On the death of Mr. Reynell his note-books dealing with the Diocese of Meath were purchased by the Rev. J. E. Preston, Rector of Julianstown, and by his courtesy the author has been allowed to compare his own lists with those of Mr. Reynell. Although in the main agreeing, they, in nearly every parish, supplement one another. The principal sources of information are the *First Fruits Returns*, the *Register of Institutions*, and the *Visitation Returns*. Many names, however, have been gleaned from other sources—so many that it is quite evident that the officials must often have forgotten to make regular entries. The lists that follow are not given as being in any sense complete, but the author trusts that they may be found useful as a groundwork for further investigation.

It is to be noted that the date prefixed to a name is the ascertained date of the commencement of the incumbency; the date following a name is the ascertained termination of the incumbency. When the year is given between brackets it signifies that the clergyman is known to have held the incumbency at that date, but that no evidence has been found to fix it either as the beginning or the end. Where the word "Preacher" is appended, it means that the appointment was made under Oliver Cromwell.

RURAL DEANERY OF UPPER KELLS.

Up to 1854 there was only one Deanery of Kells. Since that date it has been divided into two, Upper and Lower.

UNION OF KELLS.

Consists of Kells, Dulane, Balra Balrathburry.

IN the oldest records these parishes been united "time out of mind." V of Kells, however, none of the chur been used since the time of the R Rector of this Union, up to the tir ment, held also the Archdeaconry of boyne was separated from the Unio a perpetual curacy in 1844, but was in 1892. The Church of Kells (St. C in 1778. The steeple, which stan the church, is part of the pre-Refc When the church was rebuilt, a spi steeple, which seems to have been blown down in a storm. The presen by Lord Bective in 1783. The Chur (St. Baithen) was built in 1844, on a fort demesne. An iron church was Burry by the late Mr. Nicholson, ar public worship in 1877.

11—	Helias.	1489	Chi
1190	Ralph le Petit.	1528	Chi
1222	R——.	1540	Joh
1235	Simon de Burford	1558	Ro
1264	Richard of Malmesbury.	1559	Joh
1269	John de Dumbilton.	1603	Ow
1289	John de Kenelve.	1606	Th
1295	William de Sidan.	1608	Joh
1325	William St. Leger.	1613	Ra
1350	Robert de Emeldon.	1633	Joh
1361	Matthew Crumpe.	1634	Ro
1362	Adam Owen.	1644	Art
1369	Henry Poole.	1661	An
1372	Matthew Crumpe.	1678	Wi
1374	Andrew Brandon.	1681	He
1386	Thomas Sprott.	1698	Jar
1388	William Carleil.	1723	Ge
1400	Thomas Bathe.	1730	Wi
1407	William or Walter Young.	1732	Ja
		1759	Ch
1450	John White.	1799	Th

1844 Edward Adderly Stopford, D.D.
1872 Joseph S. Bell, LL.D.
1887 John Healy, LL.D.

Curates.

— William Smith (1622)
1729 John Power.
— Currell Smith (1733)
1739 Stephen Bootle.
1747 J. Stanley Monck.
1748 Henry Roberts.
1752 Dixie Blundell.
1760 Christopher Betty.
1770 John Falkiner.
1773 William T. Jones.
1779 John Patterson.
1788 Francis Ennis.
1794 Wentworth Shields.
1796 Jason Crawford.
1800 Thomas Morris.
1808 Frederick Augustus Morris.
1812 John Robert Moffat.
1821 Richard Bell Booth.
1844 John Hopkins.
1846 William Mills.
1849 William Kempston.
1855 Bartholomew Labarte.
1856 Garrett Nugent.
1857 John Swifte Joly.
1862 Charles C. Fullerton.
1864 H. H. MacAdams.
1865 John A. Cross.
1872 F. L. Meares.
1872 H. de Burgh Sidley.
1876 Thomas R. Rice.
1877 W. J. Kingsborough.
1880 Alexander M'Cully.
1881 Charles P. Grierson.
1883 R. R. Graham.
1885 John N. Lombard.
1886 George Healy.
1887 Edmund Lombard.
1892 Jonathan Oswald Airth Richardson.
1895 Charles Edward Hardy.
1898 Frederick W. Knight.
1901 Beresford Townsend Gahan.
1907 Marcus Henry Moore Given.

Union of Moynalty.

Consists of Moynalty, Newtown, Kilbeg, Robertstown, and Emlagh.

The union of Newtown, Kilbeg, Robertstown, and Emlagh was formed in 1802, and these parishes were joined to Moynalty after disestablishment. The Church of Moynalty (St. Mary) was built in 1819. Originally the church of the union of Newtown was at Kilbeg, but later the Church of Newtown was erected, and is still in use.

Moynalty.

1416 Peter de la Felde.
1564 Nicholas Talbot
— John Carte (1604).
1618 Thomas Smyth.
— John Brookes (1634).
1641 Henry Pemberton.
1674 William Jones.
1681 Theophilus Harrison.
1682 George Proud.
1693 Thomas Tucker.
1740 Charles Meredith.
1745 John Brett, D.D.
1768 Edward Day.
1772 Charles Woodward.
1793 Hon. Edward Taylour.

1803 William Kellett.
1851 Henry Brougham.
1865 John W. Dundas, D.D.
1893 John Beatty, LL.D.
1907 Bennett Samuel Radcliffe.

Curates.

1739 James Sheridan.
Philip Smith (1826).
Charles James Lambert (1842).

NEWTOWN.

1618 Hugo Skinner.
— William Smyth (1622).
1630 Thomas Williams.
1666 Alexander Abercrombie.
1693 Thomas Tucker.
1728 Thomas Tucker, Jun.
1733 James Latimer.
1740 Charles Meredyth.
1745 Charles Newton.
1748 John Bradshaw.
1753 Gerald Macklin.
1769 Thomas Simcocks.
1800 Wentworth Shields.
1829 Joseph Stevenson.
1863 Henry Ashe.
— Frederick Fitzwilliam Trench, 1869.
1870 James Staunton.

Curates.

— William Brabazon (1826)
1860 Johnston H. Acheson.

KILBEG.

— John Fitz Johns (1622)
1684 James Moore.
1692 Thomas Tucker.
1717 Thomas Tucker, Jun.
1747 John Bradshaw.
1769 Thomas Simcocks.
1800 Wentworth Shields.
1802 United to Newtown.

ROBERTSTOWN.

— John Fitz Johns (1622)
1684 James Moore.
1692 Thomas Tucker.
1747 John Bradshaw.
1802 United to Newtown.

EMLAGH.

1644 Ambrose Jones.
1682 John Stearne.
1703 Thomas Grantham.
1709 Alexander Abercrombie.
1718 Thomas Tucker.
1747 John Bradshaw.
1800 Wentworth Shields.
1802 United to Newtown.

PARISH OF LOUGHAN.

Very little record of this parish is preserved. Ussher makes no mention of it, and within the last hundred years the Rural Dean reported that after making diligent enquiry he was unable to find it. There are two ancient church sites in the parish. An iron church (St. Kieran the Pious) has been erected on a new site. The parish is now served by the incumbent of Munterconnaught, in the Diocese of Kilmore.

1860 H. Hugh O'Neill.
— A. G. Elliott, 1868.
1868 Denis Knox.
1885 Joseph King.
1890 Albert King.
1894 John Thomas Webster.

Parish of Kilskyre.

The Church (St. Sciria) was built early in the nineteenth century, and stands on the top of the hill in the village of Crossakeel. The original site is about a mile distant.

1385 John Taaf.
1408 William Silk.
1442 Richard Stanyhurst.
— Richard Lindson (1604)
— Richard Purdam (1622)
1662 Thomas Bladen, D.D.
1664 John Creighton, D.D.
1670 Richard Duddle.
1697 George Adams.
1703 Ralph Lambert.
1709 Richard Moreton.
1717 Josias Hort.
1721 Robert Howard, D.D.
1723 John Ward.
1765 Dixie Blundell.
1769 Hon. Joseph Bourke.
1772 John Andrews.
1777 Michael Daniel.
1806 Hon. Pierce Butler.
1808 Thomas De Lacy.
— Henry Ormsby, 1818.
1844 Richard Bell Booth.
1866 John M. Maguire.
1867 Louis M. Maunsell.

Curates.

— Charles Woodward (1768)
— John O'Neill (1826).
— R. A. Martin.
1860 Richard Booth.

RURAL DEANERY OF LOWER KELLS.

Union of Kilmainham Wood.

Consists of Kilmainham Wood and Moybologue.

The Records of Kilmainham Wood are very imperfect. It is not mentioned by Ussher. The church (St. John the Baptist) was built in 1806. In 1877 the Parish of Moybologue, formerly in the Diocese of Kilmore, and a chapel of ease to Bailieborough, was united to this, and at the same time a new church (St. Columba), not on the old site, was consecrated.

1791 John Kellett.
1808 Thomas Foster.
1853 Hugh Gelston.
1861 Charles Conry.
1867 Thomas Robinson, LL.D.
1878 James E. H. Murphy.
1882 John Beatty, LL.D.
1896 William F. Legge.
1904 Herbert M. C. Hughes.

Union of Enniskeen.

Consists of Enniskeen and Ardagh.

Both these parishes were formerly united to the bishopric, and were chapels of ease to Nobber. In 1784 Enniskeen was made a Perpetual Curacy. The church (St. Ernan) was built at the end of the eighteenth century. After disendowment, the Parish of Ardagh was united to Enniskeen. The Church (St. Patrick) was consecrated in 1806.

Enniskeen.

1622 Edward Roberts.
1723 Edward Cassidy.
1785 James Stopford.
1788 John Nevin.
1799 Thomas Frederick Knipe
— Arthur Rolleston.
1816 William Pratt.
— James Wolfe Charlton.
1844 Robert Winning.
— Edward Norman.
— Thomas Moriarty.
— Francis Briscoe.
1861 Hugh Gelston.
1894 James Harte.

Curate.

1873 Thomas Rudd.

Ardagh.

1723 Edward Cassidy.
1806 William H. Woods.
1816 Michael De Courcey.
John M'Causland (1825)
1826 William Pratt.
Arthur Stephenson (1842).
Edward Fairtlough (1848-1872).

Union of Drakestown.

Consists of Drakestown, Castletown-Kilpatrick, Knock, Staholmock, Cruicetown, and Nobber.

In 1740 a union was made of the Parishes of Drakestown, Castletown-Kilpatrick, and Knock. The church (St. Patrick) is in Castletown-Kilpatrick, and was built in 1820. In the old documents this Parish is call Kilpatrick, and it is sometimes impossible to determine whether this or Kilpatrick in the Union of Rathgraffe is meant. Where such doubt exists, a query (?) is put after the name. The Parish of Nobber was formerly appropriate to the Archdeaconry of Kells, and when that dignity became attached to the See, the bishops became rectors. The church (St. John the Baptist) was built in 1717. It was formed into a Perpetual

Curacy in 1784. Staholmock and Cruicetown were united to Syddan in 1823, but the union does not seem to have taken effect immediately, as some later appointments to these parishes are noted. The present Union of Drakestown was formed shortly after disestablishment.

DRAKESTOWN.

1616 James Trench.
1638 John Hoskins.
1660 William Sheridan.
1660 John Kerdiff.
1664 Ambrose Jones.
1679 Mark Ussher.
1702 Thomas Forbes.
1718 Philip Whittingham
1740 Michael Whittingham.
1780 Samuel Close.
1813 Robert Longfield.
1835 Edward Nixon.
1847 William Mackesy.
1883 Charles Faussett.
1884 H. B. Hewson.
1886 W. W. Burbury.
1887 William Frederick Alment.

Curates.

1862 John Fleming.
1873 James Smyth Franks.
1868 Thomas George Irwin.
1869 Richard Smyth.

CASTLETOWN-KILPATRICK.

1386 John Asserby (?).
— Nicholas Boyle, 1595 (?)
1595 Thaddeus Boyle (?)
1616 Daniel Clarke (?).
1617 William Smyth.
1665 Ambrose Jones.
1682 Thomas Hawley.
1702 Thomas Forbes.
1740 United to Drakestown.

KNOCK.

— William Smyth (1622).
1641 Nathaniel Nanscome.
1664 Ambrose Jones.
1702 Thomas Forbes.
1740 United to Drakestown.

STAHOLMOCK.

1613 John Forsith.
1621 Hugh Symes.
1622 Thomas Wilson.
1623 William Donnellan.
1625 William Gleeson.
1633 Richard Mattheson.
1664 Ambrose Jones.
1682 John Sterne.
1703 Thomas Grantham.
1721 Richard Bolton.
— John Bolton 1761.
1761 John Bradshaw.
1769 John Bowden.
— Marmaduke Cramer, 1788.
1788 Brabazon Disney.
1823 United to Syddan.
1830 Thomas Birney.
1831 Benjamin Hobart.

CRUICETOWN.

— John Fitz Johns (1622).
1628 Samuel Clarke.
1664 Ambrose Jones.
1682 John Sterne.
1703 Thomas Grantham.
1721 Richard Bolton.
1761 John Bradshaw.
1769 John Bowden.
1776 Marmaduke Cramer.
1788 Brabazon Disney.
1823 United to Syddan.
1830 Thomas Birney.
1830 Thomas Dawson Logan.

NOBBER.

1418 Robert Sutton.
1535 Thomas Lockwood.
— William Medcalfe (1622).
1754 Thomas White.
— John Gorges (1785).
— John Gibbons (1791).
— Thomas Frederick Knipe, 1799.
1799 James Ellis.
1832 John Wynne M'Causland.
1868 Moritz Kaufman.

DEANERY OF SLANE.

UNION OF SLANE.
Consists of Slane, Fennor, Grangegeeth, and Monknewtown.

This Union seems to have been made in the eighteenth century. The only church is that of Slane (St. Patrick), which was built in 1712, and enlarged in 1830.

SLANE.

1312 John Fleming.
— Roger Winter, 1386.
1386 Robert Sutton.
1389 Richard Bonevyll.
1402 William Rowe.
— Mr. Adyn (1431).
1431 William Sutton.
— Thomas White, 1615.
— Edmund Southern (1633.)
1667 Arthur Ellis.
1673 Dermot Sullivan.
1676 Laurence Jones.
1695 John Burton.
1702 John Barton, D.D.
1719 Ossory Medlicott.
1719 Samuel Holt.
1720 John Maxwell.
1763 Bernard Dogherty.
1786 Mervyn Archdall.
1792 Thomas Brownrigg.
1814 Moore Smith.
1815 Brabazon Disney.
1831 John James Disney.
1865 John Westropp Brady.
1902 Charles Edward Hardy.

Curates.

— Joseph Ridgway.
1857 J. B. Doyle.
1858 John Leared Irvine.
1860 Brabazon Thomas Disney.

FENNOR.

— Edward Southerne (1622).
— Thomas Bateson (1633).
— Laurence Jones (1693).

GRANGEGEETH.

— Nicholas Tedder (1622).

MONKNEWTOWN.

— Nicholas Tedder (1622).
— Samuel Holt (1733).

UNION OF PAYNESTOWN.

Consists of Paynestown, Ardmulchan, Knockcommon, Stackallen, Gernonstown, Dunmoe, and Rathkenny.

The parishes of Paynestown and Ardmulchan were united in 1672. The church (St. Mary) is old, but was practically rebuilt in 1823. Stackallen, Gernonstown, and Dunmoe were united in 1677, but the union seems to have been ineffective, for they were again united in 1803. The Church (St. Mary) was built in 1815. The Parish of Knockcommon was formerly in the Union of Duleek. Rathkenny Church (St. Canice) is still preserved, though no longer in use. These churches were served by the same clergyman from the time of disestablishment, but the actual union did not take place until 1902.

PAYNESTOWN.

— James Winfrey (1546).
1550 Cornelius Coyne.
1559 Terence Larr.
1560 Adam Loftus.
— Gilbert Purdam (1615).
1633 Jocelyn Ussher.
1684 Joslin Barnes.
1682 Michael Jephson.
1688 Lawrence Jones.
1695 John Barton.
1702 John Barton, D.D.
1718 Samuel Holt or Richard Fisher.*
1763 Hon. George Maitland.
1764 Hon. Thomas Stopford.
1794 Brinsley Nixon.
1799 George Brabazon.
1807 George Brabazon.
1851 Somerset Lowry Townsend.
1854 Peter D. Digges La Touche.
1902 William Coates Harvey, LL.D.

Curates.

1615 William Mulligan.
— Edward Sowtherne (1622).
— J. Burton (1733).
1850 Francis R. Sadleir.

ARDMULCHAN.

1542 Roger Doreham.
1550 Cornelius Coyne.
— William Phillips (1622).
1628 Samuel Clarke.
1671 Richard Tennison.
1672 United to Paynestown

Curate.

1693 Laurence Jones.

KNOCKCOMMON.

— William Hayley (1622).
— William Lloyde (1633).
— Lancelot Dowdall (1713).
1816 United to Duleek.

* Holt, according to *Diocesan Register*; Fisher, according to *First Fruits Book*.

STACKALLEN.

— John Staneyhurst, 1413.
1413 Christopher Hunt.
— Edward Sowtherne (1622).
1688 Edward Parkinson.
1721 Richard Fisher.
1768 William Nesbitt.
— William Marshall (1799).
1800 George Hardman.
1828 Brabazon William Disney.
— John Hopkins, 1842.
1852 Thomas Gordon Caulfield.
1854 Peter Digges La Touche.
1859 Paulus O. Singer.
1867 Achilles Daunt.
— Frederick Wetherell.
1868 John H. Freke.

Curates.

— Thomas Green (1693).
— Francis D. Hamilton (1826).
1859 Mervyn Archdall Clare.
1863 Edward AugustusLester.

GERNONSTOWN.

1616 William Hayley.
1632 Thomas Bateson.
1636 William Meoles.
1665. Darby Sullivan.
Edward Parkinson (1676).
1721 Richard Fisher.
1800 United to Stackallen.

DUNMOE.

Robert Nicoll (1622).
Roger Puttock.
1641 John Bodkin.
1721 Richard Fisher.
1800 United to Stackallen.

RATHKENNY.

1542 John Tyrrell.
John Robynson (1622).
1630 William Lloyd.
1665 Roger Jones.
1667 William Meoles.
1670 William Meoles.
1673 James Mandesley.
— John C. Brown (1693).
1696 Richard Reader, D.D.
1699 Arthur Forbes, Sen.
— John Grace (1733).
— Thomas Greene, 1743.
1743 Arthur Forbes, Jun.
1784 Charles Roberts.
1800 Robert Henry.
1808 Barry M'Gusty.
1814 Anthony Adams.
1832 Robert Patrick Dansey Hamilton.
— John William Allison, 1872.

Curate.

Francis Davidson (1826).

UNION OF DRUMCONRATH.

Consists of Drumconrath, Innismot, Loughbraccan, Syddan, Killary, and Mitchelstown.

Drumconrath Church (St. Peter) was erected in 1766. The Union of Syddan, Killary, and Mitchelstown was made in 1734. The Church of Syddan (St. David) is a new one, and was built by a bequest of the late Miss Elizabeth Ball. It was consecrated in 1881. Innismot retained its independent existence until 1833, when it was "suspended," there being no church,

and only five Protestant parishioners. Loughbraccan was formerly in the Union of Nobber, but was transferred to this Union when it was formed, consequent on disestablishment.

DRUMCONRATH.

1387 Nicholas Fleming.
Thomas White (1622).
1635 Augustus Arland Ussher.
1680 Robert Parkinson.
1699 Arthur Forbes.
1737 Arthur Forbes, jun.
1783 Bartholomew Lutley Scleater.
1791 Hon. Richard Bourke.
1795 Hon. Joseph Bourke.
1795 Hon. Hamilton Cuffe.
1811 James Wilmot Ormsby.
1813 John William Keating, D.D.
1817 Henry Dawson.
1819 Hon. Skeffington Preston
1844 Edward Michael Hamilton.
— Lyndon Henry Bolton (1868).
R. Gordon Cumming, 1872.
1872 Samuel Law.
1892 William J. Kittson.
1896 Stephen Radcliff.

Curates.

1855 James J. Duncan.
1861 Matthew Lord Eaton.

INNISMOT.

William Metcalfe (1622).
1737 Arthur Forbes.
1783 William R. Hawley.
1799 Valentine Duke.
William Hawkins (1799).
1807 George Brabazon.
Brabazon W. Disney (1826).

LOUGHBRACCAN.

1410 William Alexander.
1621 John Forseath.
1621 Nathaniell Chapman.
1639 James Beswicke.

SYDDAN.

1544 Henry Teeling.
1545 Edward Karlan.
1553 Maurice Flanagan.
— William Medcalfe (1622)
1685 John Stearne.
1693 Thomas Whalley.
1729 John Bradshaw.
1769 John Boden.
1776 Marmaduke Cramer.
1777 Robert Erving.
1788 Brabazon Disney.
1823 Brabazon W. Disney.
1828 George Hardman.
1829 William Brabazon, 1872.

Curates.

1860 Alexander Mulholland.
1868 John Carter.
1869 John William Allison.

KILLARY.

1560 Richard Birmingham.
1622 George Sing.
1626 William Griffin.
1630 Richard Lingard.
1634 John Caryford.
1637 James Beswicke.
1661 John Matthews.
1677 Robert Erwing.
1685 John Sterne.
1687 James Grantham.
1700 Thomas Grantham.
1703 John Sterne.
1704 Michael Hartlie.
1729 John Bradshaw.
1741 Thomas Whalley.
1741 Isaac Mann.
1751 Oliver Brady.

1761 Thomas or John Lucas.
1769 John Bowden.
1776 Marmaduke Cramer.
1786 James Stopford.
1788 Brabazon Disney.
1797 George Lambart.
1820 William Gregory.

MITCHELSTOWN.

William Medcalfe (1622).
1685 John Stearne.
1693 Thomas Whalley.
1729 John Bradshaw.
1734 United to Syddan.

UNION OF DONAGHPATRICK.

Consists of Donaghpatrick, Kilberry, Clongill, Kilshine, and Teltown.

A new Church (St. Patrick) has been built at Donaghpatrick by Mr. Thomas Gerrard, which was consecrated in 1897. The Union of Donaghpatrick and Kilberry was formed in 1801. Clongill and Kilshine were united in 1809, and they still remain technically a separate Union; for, although served by the Rector of Donaghpatrick, the union with that Parish has never been ratified by the Synod. Kilshine Church (St. Sinche) was consecrated in 1812.

DONAGHPATRICK.

1551 Redmond Ledwich.
— John Wingfield (1622).
— William Davyes, 1628.
1638 George Dunbar.
1639 Robert Worrall.
1660 William Sheridan.
1677 Laurence Jones.
1683 Edward Roberts.
1724 David Roberts.
1761 Joseph Pasley.
1772 Nathaniel or William Preston.
1796 John O'Connor.
1803 George O'Connor.
1843 George Everard.
1863 Henry Thomas Wilmot.
1863 William Maziere Brady, D.D.
1872 Duncan J. Brownlow.
1882 John Andrew Jennings.
1896 Duncan J. Brownlow (re-appointed).
1904 Henry Edmund Patton.

Curates.

— Richard Carter (1842).
1870 Francis M. Hanlon.

KILBERRY.

1449 John Stackboll.
— William Botiller (1408).
— Edward Delahyde 1535.
1535 Robert Luttrell.
1560 Richard Birmingham.
1561 William Brady.
1584 John Arward.
1616 William Davis.
— William Phillips (1622).
1628 Samuel Clarke.
1633 William Smith.
1681 John Twells.
1671 Henry Cottingham.
1688 William Lightburne.
— Thomas Greene, 1743.
1743 William Paine.
1767 Richard Godley, D.D.
1791 Richard Vincent.
1801 United to Donaghpatrick.

KILSHINE.

1638 John Hoskins.
1660 John Kerdiff.
1672 Edward Williams.
1674 James Moore Clarke.
1692 Edward Roberts.
1724 Henry Roberts.
1763 Gerard Macklin.
1771 Dawson Crow.
1790 Wardlaw Ball.
1805 Robert Barker.
1809 Thomas Sutton.
1844 Anthony Blackburne.
1850 Thomas Adderley Stopford.

Curates.

1850 Thomas Burton.
1862 Thomas Irwin.

CLONGILL.

— Robert Haket (1422).
1616 James Trench.
1638 John Hoskins.
1660 John Kerdiff.
1671 Edward Williams.
1673 Richard Jones.
1638 Edward Roberts.
1729 Theophilus Roberts.
1780 William Hale.
1788 Francis Taylor.
Francis Jones (1789).
1792 Thomas Butler.
1793 Mungo H. Noble.
1809 United to Kilshine.

TELTOWN.

16— William Davys.
1660 William Sheridan.

RURAL DEANERY OF DULEEK.

UNION OF DULEEK.

Consists of Duleek, Ardcath, Dowth, and Timoole.

The Union of Duleek was formed in 1816. The only church is that of Duleek (St. Keenan), which was built in 1816 and consecrated in 1826. The ruins of the old abbey church stand in the graveyard.

DULEEK.

1616 William Hayley, St. Kennies.
— Edward Hayward (1622), St. Mary's.
— William Hayward (1633), St. Mary's.
— William Lloyd (1633), (St. Kennies).
— Thomas Bladin, preacher (1658).
— John C. Brown (1693).
— Mr. Higgins (1694).
1708 J. or Henry Echlin.
1716 John Hatch.
1719 Launcelot Dowdall.
1753 William Bradish.
1788 William Slessor Hamilton.
1813 Moore Morgan.
1814 Joseph Turner.
1831 Edward Batty.
1856 J. George Digges La Touche.
1863 Alfred Hamilton.

1863 William Hoyte.
1868 Brabazon W. Brunker.
1878 Henry Ashe.
1906 Charles Horatio Walter Hammick.

ARDCATH.

— John Bolt (1421).
1533 Edward Serle.
1616 William Hayley.
— William Lloyde (1633).
1670 William Meoles.
1700 James Cooper.
1712 Piers Collingwood.
1793 Robert Shanley.
1813 Moore Morgan.
1816 United to Duleek.

DOWTH.

— Nicholas Tedder (1622).
1667 Arthur Ellis.
1674 George Booker.
1692 John C. Brown.
1699 Thomas Cox.
— John Echlin (1733).
1753 William Bradish.
1816 United to Duleek.

Curate.

— Launcelot Dowdall (1733).

TIMOOLE.

— Richard Coffy (1622).
1673 William Meoles.
1700 James Cooper.
1712 Piers Collingwood.
1793 Robert Shanley.
1813 Moore Morgan.
1816 United to Duleek.

UNION OF ST. MARY'S, DROGHEDA.

Consists of St. Mary's, Colpe, Mornington, and Donore.

St. Mary's Church was erected in 1810. The Union of Colpe, Mornington, and Kilsharvan was formed in 1826. After disestablishment, Colpe and Mornington, with Donore, were joined to Drogheda, and Kilsharvan was transferred to Julianstown. Colpe Church (St. Columba) was built in 1809.

ST. MARY'S, DROGHEDA.

1376 Bartholomew Dullard.
— Robert Sutton, 1386.
1387 Roger Winter.
1615 John Egerton.
1618 Robert Burton.
1660 Thomas Burton.
— Michael Briscoe, preacher (1658)
— ffaithful Geale, preacher (1658).
— John Hook, preacher (1658).
1683 John Mandsley.
1708 John Echlin.
1763 Thomas Ferguson.
1768 Samuel Lindsay.
1774 Humphrey French, D.D.
1778 Charles Crawford.
1821 James Crawford.
1844 Richard Carter.
1862 James Rynd Briscoe.
1872 John Archer.
1905 Thomas Redmond Brunskill.

Curates.

1756 Richard Bunworth
— James Hamilton (1818).
1846 Richard Carter.

1868 Arthur William Wynne Durham.
1889 William M'Kenna.
1898 William Coates Harvey.
1901 Herbert A. S. Merrick.
1904 Charles Horatio Walter Hammick.

COLPE.

— Robert Burton (1622).
— John Echlin (1733).
1763 Samuel Preston.
1780 Felix O'Neill.
1784 John Barrett.
1793 John Lever.
1807 Moore Morgan.
1808 Robert Gore Whistler.
1813 Robert Whistler.
1815 Hugh Shields.
1820 Charles Ferguson.
1826 Alexander Johnston Montgomery.
1841 Joseph Druitt.
1869 Danby Jeffares.

Curate.

1870 John W. Chambers.

MORNINGTON.

— Robert Burton (1622).

DONORE.

— Launcelot Dowdall (1622).
1719 Robert Burton.

UNION OF JULIANSTOWN.

Consists of Julianstown, Ballygarth, Clonalvey, Kilsharvan, Moorechurch, and Stamullen.

The Union of Julianstown, Moorechurch, Stamullen, and Clonalvey, was made in 1813. Ballygarth was an independent Parish, though without a church, until 1844, when, on the death of John Burdett, the tithes were vested in the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. Kilsharvan was added to this Union after disestablishment. The Church of Julianstown (St. Mary) was built in 1770. Within recent times it was completely restored and almost rebuilt, though some of the old work still remains. It is now being enlarged, and a handsome steeple is being erected, by Colonel Pepper, D.L., of Ballygarth Castle.

JULIANSTOWN OR NANY.

1615 Thomas Lees.
1628 Launcelot Lowther.
1660 Thomas Burton.
1673 Henry Goldwyer.
1673 William Meols.
1688 Gabriel Meols.
1694 Thomas Langdall.
1700 James Cooper.
1712 Piers Collingwood.
1732 Stewart Wilder.
1771 Anthony French.
1780 Henry Blacker.
1793 William Slessor Hamilton.
1813 Robert Shanley.
1821 John W. Beauman.

1828 William Vandeleur.
1844 Henry Moore.
1879 Frederick Henry Smith, M.D.
1884 John Evans Preston.

Curate.

— Edward Fairtlough (1842).

BALLYGARTH.

1392 William White.
1398 Robert May.
— John Derbishire (1604).
1615 Richard Purdon.
— Thomas Lees (1622).
1679 Thomas Fitz Symons.
1688 Gabriel Meols.
1693 William Meols.
1694 Thomas Langdall.
1706 Henry Matthews.
1740 Daniel Jackson.
1746 John Jackson.
1774 Richard Moore.
1776 John Bayly.
1799 John Burdett.
1841 Suspended.

CLONALVEY.

— Nicholas Tedder (1622).
1637 Adam Jones.
1692 Joceline Barnes.
1692 John Brown.
1708 Henry Echlin.
1716 John Hatch.
1720 Launcelot Dowdall.
1753 William Bradish.
— William Slessor Hamilton, 1813.
1813 Robert Shanley.
1821 United to Julianstown.

Curates.

— Thomas Langdall (1693).
1708 John Echlin.

KILSHARVAN.

— Adam Jones (1622).
1651 Thomas Burton.
1688 Thomas Burton.
1692 John Brown.
1705 Henry Moore.
1708 Henry Echlin.
1716 J. Echlin.
1716 John Hatch.
1763 Thomas Ferguson.
— Charles Ferguson, 1826.
1826 Alexander Johnston.

Curate.

— Thomas Langdale (1693)

MOORECHURCH.

1541 William Pentney.
1615 Thomas Lees.
1628 Launcelot Lowther.
1673 William Meols.
1688 Gabriel Meols.
1700 James Cooper.
1712 Piers Collingwood.
1771 Anthony French.
1780 Henry Blacker.
1821 United to Julianstown.

STAMULLEN.

1398 Hugh Lange.
1403 Philip Blake.
— Thomas Cornwalsh.
— Thomas Caddell, 1536.
1536 Simon Geffrey.
1615 Thomas Lees.
1616 William Hagley.
1628 Henry Leslie.
1632 Thomas Butson.
1636 William Meoles.
1688 Thomas Burton.
1692 Joceline Barnes.
1692 John Brown.
1708 Henry Echlin.
1716 John Hatch.
1720 Launcelot Dowdall.
1753 William Bradish.
1789 William Slessor Hamilton.

Curates.

— John Echlin (1622).
— Thomas Langdall (1693).
1708 John Echlin.

UNION OF KENTSTOWN.

Consists of Kentstown, Danestown, Ballymagarvey, Brownstown, Staffordstown, and Rathfeigh.

The Union of Kentstown, Danestown, and Ballymagarvey was made in 1801. Rathfeigh and Staffordstown were formerly in the Union of Skryne, to which they were united in 1677. The Church of Kentstown (St. Mary) was erected early in the nineteenth century.

KENTSTOWN.

— Luke Ussher (1622).
1677 Laurence Jones.
1702 John Barton, D.D.
1718 John Matthews.
1724 Patrick Lyon.
1759 Bernard Dogherty.
1786 James Stopford.
1786 John Ball.
1800 John Toler.
1832 Richard George.
— Charles J. Lambert, 1857.
1857 John George Brighton.
1872 Andrew Robinson.
1878 Alfred T. Harvey.
1886 Edward Goff.
1898 James Henry Rice.

Curates.

1826 Henry Gibson.
1868 Oliver Brighton.

DANESTOWN.

— Richard Hone, 1549.
1549 Christopher Gaffney.
— Nicholas Bocham (1622).
1637 James Beswicke.
1682 Laurence Jones.
1695 John Burton.
1702 John Barton, D.D.
1718 Richard Fisher.
1785 Charles Roberts.
1800 Robert Henry.
1801 United to Kentstown

Curate.

— Patrick Lyon (1733).

BALLYMAGARVEY.

— Richard Hone, 1549.
1549 Christopher Gaffney.
1619 William Hayward.
1620 Edward Hayward.
1671 John Fitzgerald.
1684 Joceline Barnes.
1718 Charles Cobb.
1720 Samuel Holt.
1737 Hanover Sterling.
1763 Bernard Dogherty.
1763 Charles Agur.
1785 Charles Roberts.
1800 Robert Henry.
1801 United to Kentstown.

BROWNSTOWN.

1637 James Carey, first Rector.

Curates.

— Laurence Jones (1693).
1725 Patrick Lyon.

STAFFORDSTOWN.

— Laurence Jones (1693).

RATHFEIGH.

— Godfrey Loftus (1604).
1619 John Bathe.
1630 William Fitzgerald.
1638 Charles Cullen.
1676 Noah Webb.
1668 Henry Bolton.
1677 United to Skryne.

RURAL DEANERY OF SKRYNE.

UNION OF SKRYNE.

Consists of Skryne, Dowdstown, Kilcarn, Lismullen, Monktown, Templekieran, and Tara.

The Union of Skryne was formed in 1677. The Parish of Rathfeigh, which formerly belonged to it, was transferred by the Synod, first to Kilmoon, and afterwards to Kentstown. The church in use was that of the Parish of Templekieran, but this has lately been dismantled, and a new church built in the Parish of Lismullen, by the exertions and liberality of Sir John Dillon, Bart. It was consecrated under the name of St. Columba's Church in 1904. The Parish of Tara was joined to the Union at disestablishment. Tara Church (St. Patrick) was built in 1823.

SKRYNE.

1283 James of Spain.
— Nicholas Wafre (1402).
1450 Walter Prendergast.
1534 Peter Wallis.
— Thomas White, 1598.
1598 William Whitereede.
1606 Thomas Robinson.
1619 Morgan Jones.
1623 Robert Nicholl.
1662 Thomas Hill.
1692 Joceline Barnes.
1719 Charles Cobb.
1720 Samuel Holt.
1763 Charles Agur.
1765 Samuel Pulleine.
1784 Verney Lovett.
1785 Richard Swanne.
1794 Richard Wynne.
1796 Stephen Radcliff.
1829 Richard Radcliff.
1871 Oliver Brighton.
1896 Leslie A. Handy.

Curate.

— John Sayler (1615).

DOWDSTOWN.

1616 John Sealer.
— Morgan Jones (1619).
1623 Robert Nicholl.
1662 Thomas Hill.
1684 Joceline Barnes.
1677 United to Skryne.

KILCARN.

— Morgan Jones (1622).
1674 Henry Moneypeney.
1677 United to Skryne.

LISMULLEN.

1677 United to Skryne.

MONKTOWN.

— Samuel Holt (1733).

TEMPLEKEIRAN.

1621 Morgan Jones.
1677 United to Skryne.

TARA.

— Audoen Brode (1422).
— Edmund Oronnow, 1599.
1599 John Moineghan.

1620 Cadwalader Edmonds or Edwards.
1624 Richard Hackett.
1627 Launcelot Lowther.
1633 Edward Stanhope.
1634 Thomas Walmeslie.
1671 Christopher Kerdiffe.
1675 Marcus Ussher.
1697 Thomas Conigsby.
1707 Randulph Dawson.
1708 John Wetherby, D.D.
1709 Archibald Ayton.
1721 John Hamilton.
1724 John Madden, D.D.
1734 Richard Stewart.
1751 Anthony Malone.
1780 George Maunsell or Maxwell.
1781 John Rogers.
1810 William Henry Irvine.
1839 Mark Perrin.
1840 Joseph Richard Hamilton.

Curates.

— William Bradish (1753).
— Sliar Hamilton.
1780 Valentine Duke
1781 John Williamson.

Union of Kilmessan.

Consists of Kilmessan, Assey, Balsoon, Dunsany, Killeen, Kiltale, and Trubly.

The Parishes of Assy and Balsoon were made into a separate Union in 1826, but in neither Parish was there church or glebe house; they were, therefore, subsequently joined to Kilmessan. Dunsany and Killeen became in 1680 part of the Union of Tara. Kiltale was united to Knockmark in 1811. Trubly formed part of the Union of Trim. The present rearrangement was made after disestablishment. Macetown, which was formerly joined to Kilmessan, is now in the Union of Ratoath. The Church of Kilmessan (St. Mary) was built in 1731, and has recently been restored.

Kilmessan.

— John Mey, 1444.
— James Daley (1622).
1628 Joseph Singe.
1641 Peter Harrison.
1671 George Booker.
1693 John C. Brown.
1700 James Cooper.
1712 Moor Booker.
1729 Henry Nix.
1732 William Doyle.
1763 Samuel Preston.
1774 John Evans Franklin.
1788 John Barrett.
1793 David Charles Ingham.
1826 Charles Moore.
1828 St. George Caulfield Irvine.
— James W. Rynd, 1849.
1849 Francis Briscoe.
1885 William F. Falkiner.
1892 Anthony Drought.
1905 George H. Patton.

Assy or Athsey.

1615 James Young.
1621 Morgan Jones.

— Patrick Griffith (1633).
1684 Thomas Benson.
1716 Andrew M'Evoy.
1721 William Snowden.
1761 David Cope.
1768 William Evelyn.
1781 Blount Medlicot.
1795 David Charles Ingham.
1798 Mark Wainright.
1821 David Charles Ingham.
— St. George C. Irvine (1826).
1826 Spencer William Walsh, D.D.
1861 Francis Briscoe.

BALSOON OR RIPPERSTOWN.

1616 John Gregge.
— Edward ffennor (1622).
1626 Alexander Sharpe.
1632 Thomas Bateson.
1675 William Smith.
1684 Thomas Benson.
1715 Andrew M'Evoy.
1721 William Snowden.

DUNSANY.

1611 Richard Pollard.
1680 United to Tara.

KILLEEN.

— William Bermingham (1402).
— William Silk, 1434.
1536 Sir Henry Plunkett.
— Arthur Book (1604).
— Edward Doyle (1622).
1642 Christopher Kerdiffe.
1675 Marcus Ussher.
1680 United to Tara.

KILTALE.

— James Daley (1622).
— William Meoles (1633).
1670 Christopher Kerdiffe.
1675 Alexander Abercrombie.
1708 Thomas Grantham.
1810 William Liddiard.
1811 United to Knockmark.

TRUBLY.

— Henry de Rathfayl, (1359).
1359 Thomas Malacken.
1558 Richard Scallon.
1619 Price Griffin.
1620 Patrick Griffith.
1677 William Smith.
1688 Thomas Benson.
— John C. Brown (1693).
1715 Anthony Raymond.
1726 Hugh Dawson.
1726 Caleb De Butts.
1731 United to Trim.

UNION OF MOYGLARE.

Consists of Moyglare, Balfeighan, Kilclone, and Raddanstown.

Moyglare was an independent parish until disestablishment. Raddanstown Union was formed in 1682, and included the Parishes of Balfeighan, Kilcloon, Gallow, and Drumlargan. The last two have now been joined to Agher. The churches are ancient.

MOYGLARE.

1611 William Fitz Symmonds.
1 41 John Fitzsymons.
1 88 Thomas Mallory.
1692 Patrick Lindsay.
1709 John Wilson.
1719 James Garstin.
— Jonathan Dillon, 1729.
1765 Gaspar Caillard.

1768 Arthur Grueber.
1802 Thomas Jones.
1814 Arthur Ardagh.
1846 Richard Dixie Maunsell.
1867 Robert Hamilton.
1877 John Charles Creed.

Curates.

— Francis Davidson (1818).
1883 John Newman Lombard.

BALFEIGHAN.

— Robert Cooke (1622).
1674 Henry Monypenny.
1682 United to Raddanstown.

KILCLONE.

— William Fitz Symmonds (1622).
1674 Henry Monypenny.
1682 United to Raddanstown

RADDANSTOWN OR BALRODDAN.

— William Fitz Symmonds (1622).
1674 Henry Monypenny.
1700 Daniel Sewell.
1712 Thomas Newton.
1730 Martin Dean.
— William Davyes (1733).
1741 Gustavus Hamilton.
1755 John Bomford.
1776 Henry Blacker.
— James Blacker, 1793.
1793 Power Le Poer Trench.
1803 Ponsonby Gouldsbury.
1830 Joseph Turner, D.D.
1836 George Vaughan Sampson.
1838 William Tyrrell.
1840 William Handcock.
Samuel Abraham Walker, 1849.
1849 Robert Lauder.
1852 Francis Ralph Sadlier, D.D.

Curates.

1857 Henry Burrows.
1859 J. Staunton.

UNION OF AGHER.

Consists of Agher, Drumlargan, and Gallow.

This Union was formed at disestablishment. The church was built in 1840, and has recently been rebuilt by Mr. J. S. Winter.

AGHER OR AGHERPALLIS.

1593 Thomas Tedder.
Eugene M'Cartie, 1594.
1613 Nicholas Proud.
1614 Robert Booning.
1664 Nicholas Proud, D.D.
1669 Richard Tennison, D.D.
1682 George or Edward Synge.
1686 Richard Mallory.
1692 John Bolton, D.D.
1699 Jonathan Swift, D.D.
1745 Peter or John Hamon.
1765 Blount Medlicott.
1782 Dudley Ryves.
1784 John Ravel Walsh.
1802 John Ravell Walsh.[1]
1808 John Kellett.
1849 Robert Lauder, LL.D.
1870 George Henry Martin.
1884 Robert Seymour, D.D.
1892 Joseph Leigh Stuart.

Curate.

— William Major (1693).

[1] Probably the same as the preceding. In the Institution it says "the said Walsh having resigned."

DRUMLARGAN.

— Robert Cooke (1622).
1674 Henry Monypenny.
1682 United to Raddonstown.

GALLOW.

1617 Robert Cooke.
1674 Henry Monypenny.
1682 United to Raddonstown.

RURAL DEANERY OF RATOATH.

UNION OF RATOATH.

Consists of Ratoath, Donaghmore, Killegland, Crikstown, Cookstown, Greenogue, Kilbrew, Kilmoon, Macetown, Cushinstown, and Piercetown Landy.

The Union of Ratoath, Crikstown, Cookstown, Killegland, Donaghmore, and Greenogue was formed in 1682. The Church (Holy Trinity) was consecrated in 1821. Kilbrew and Tryvett were united in 1678, but at disestablishment the latter was transferred to Dunshaughlin. The Church was built in the eighteenth century, and is now disused. Kilmoon and Piercetown Landy were united in 1826. The Church (St. Munna) was built in 1816. The present Union was formed in 1885.

RATOATH.

1405 John Mordoun.
— William Taillour (1422).
— Patrick Fyne, 1559.
1559 John Hele.
15— John Fleming.
1603 Nicholas Smyth, *alias* Agone.
— Henry Bolton. (1633).
1675 Noah Webb.
1676 Charles Newburgh.
1677 John Bolton, D.D.
1693 John Bolton.
1720 Richard Bolton.
1761 Thomas Lee Norman.
1794 Launcelot King Cunningham.
1820 Robert Norman.
1844 Henry Johnston.
1885 John Healy, LL.D.
1887 John Howlin Montserrat.
1903 William F. Legge.

Curates.

— Edward J. Lewis (1826).
— William Tighe (1842).

DONAGHMORE.

— Nicholas Smyth (1622).
— Henry Bolton (1633).
1678 John Bolton, D.D.
1682 United to Ratoath.

KILLEGLAND.

— Nicholas Smyth (1604).
1678 John Bolton, D.D.
1682 United to Ratoath.

CRIKSTOWN.

— Nicholas Smyth (1604).
1682 United to Ratoath.

COOKSTOWN.

— Nicholas Smyth (1604).
1682 United to Ratoath.

GREENOGUE.

— Nicholas Smyth (1604).
1678 John Bolton, D.D.
1682 United to Ratoath.

KILBREW.

— Mr. Hubertstie (1604).
1619 Leonard Beckwith.
1667 Henry Bolton.
1675 Noah Webb.
1688 Joshua Barnes.
1696 Jerome Ryves.
1699 Frank Fulk.
1712 George Blake.
1763 Bigoe Henzell.
1788 Lionel, Viscount Strangford.
1801 John Molesworth Staples.
1807 Bigoe Henzell.
1819 John Uniacke Swayne.
1836 Thomas Houston Barton.
1862 Thomas Marshall.
1863 William Hammerton.

KILMOON.

1261 John de Colchester.
15— Laurence Devins.
1552 Roger Skiddy.
1619 Roger Danby.
1623 Roger Puttock.
1642 John Fitz Simons.
1663 James Bishop.
1670 Edmund Greene.
1673 Thomas Mallory.
1693 Andrew Brereton.
1717 John Smith.
— John Madden, 1744.
1744 Hill Benson.
1775 Charles Roberts.
1803 Shuckburgh R. W. Upton.
1807 Thomas or William Fairtlough.
1826 William Coddington.
— William Coddington, jun. (1842).
— Stephen or Richard Radcliff (1858).
— William John Irvine (1870).

Curate.

1870 Dillon Charles Campbell.

MACETOWN.

— Nicholas Bocham (1622).
— Patrick Griffith (1633).
1728 William Jones.
— J. Madden (1733).
1744 Hill Benson.
1776 John Jones.
— William Duncan, 1805.
1805 Charles Ingham.
1826 Charles Moore.

CUSHINSTOWN.

No record.

PIERCETOWN LANDY OR LECKNO.

— John Fuyt, 1402.
1402 John Magayga.
1442 John Loragh.
— Gerald Dalton, 1561.
— William Cocks, 1597.
1597 John Moynaghan.
1620 Cadwallader Edwards.
1624 Richard Hackett.
1627 Launcelot Lowther.
1633 Edward Stanhope.
1634 Thomas Walmeslie.
1692 John Fitzgerald.
1684 Joslin Barnes.
1693 Andrew Brereton.

1695 John Madden.
1744 Hill Benson.
1763 Charles Agur.
1775 Charles Roberts.
1803 Whitney Shuchburgh Upton.
1807 Thomas Fairtlough.
1826 United to Kilmoon.

Union of Dunshaughlin.

Consists of Dunshaughlin, Ballymaglasson, Culmullen, Knockmark, Rathbeggan, Rathregan, Tryvett, and Kilmore.

Dunshaughlin and Rathregan were united in 1678. The Church (St. Seachlan or Secundinus) was built in 1813. Ballymaglasson Church (St. Keiran) was consecrated in 1816. The Union of Knockmark, Kiltale and Culmullen was formed in 1810. The Church has now been dismantled. Rathbeggan Church (St. Beccan) was built in 1817. Kilmore Church (St. Patrick), built in the eighteenth century, is preserved, though no longer in use, except for occasional services. The present Union was formed in 1882.

Dunshaughlin.

1524 James Sheffield.
1560 Anthony Rush.
1565 George Leigh.
1567 William Leech.
1569 Joseph Darcy.
1579 James Chapman.
1580 Robert Brazier.
1588 Anthony Rush.
— John Allen, 1595.
1595 Arthur Cooke.
1615 Baldwin Shepheard.
1630 John Lennox.
16— John Allbright.
16— John Kyan.
— John Crawford (1641).
1668 Simon Digby.
1672 Noah Webb.
1696 Jerome Ryves.
1698 John Jourdain.
1751 John Powell.
1755 Bigoe Henzell.
178) William Henry Irwine.
1818 Gorges Lowther Irwine.
1838 John Low.
1855 John H. Dunne.
1864 Thomas Marshall.
1882 John H. Davidson.
1905 Hamlet McClenaghan.

Curates.

1775 Doctor Hum. ffrench.
1811 John Madden.
1848 Goodwin Swift.
1850 Robert Rowan.
1853 Nicholas Magrath.

Ballymaglasson.

— Baldwin Shepheard (1615).
— Robert Cooke (1622).
1673 Thomas Mallery.
— Patrick Lindsay (1693).
— Richard Moreton, 1708.
1708 Jonathan Wilson.
1718 Thomas Forbes.
1727 Jonathan Rogers.
1733 Christopher Donellan.
1735 Edward Molloy.
1737 Hanover Sterling.

1753 Henry Duncan, LL.D.
1760 Samuel Caldwell.
1771 William Dennis.
1771 Richard Cave.
1799 Thomas Tucker.
1811 Mervyn Pratt.
1814 Hill Benson.
1814 Skeffington Preston.
1820 William Gorman.
1824 Lambert Watson Hempenstall.
1843 Robert Handcock.
1844 William Hamerton.
1863 Brabazon W. Brunker.
1868 William Hoyte or Hoyle.
1870 William Hamerton.
1872 John H. Davidson.

Curates.

1820 William Harding.
1821 Fortescue Gorman.
1824 Thomas Smith.
1825 Thomas Pearson.
1827 Erasmus Burrowes.
1832 Richard Carter.
1832 William Simpson.

CULMULLEN.

1617 Robert Cooke.
1638 Thomas Carter.
1639 Alexander Bailie.
1642 Christopher Kerdiffe.
1675 Marcus Ussher.
1697 Wilfred Lawson.
1717 John Hamilton.
1721 Anthony Lowrey.
1742 David Cope.
1763 William Donellan.
1789 Hon. Thomas St. Laurence.
1794 T. Vesey Dawson.
1807 William Liddiard.
1811 United to Knockmark.

KNOCKMARK.

— Thomas Robinson, 1619.
1620 Cadwalader Edwards.
1624 Richard Hackett.
1627 Launcelot Lother.
1633 Edward Stanhope.
1634 Thomas Walmeslie.
1640 John Swayne.
1671 Christopher Kerdiffe.
1675 Alexander Abercrombie.
1708 Thomas Grantham.
1721 John Shadwell.
1724 Jonathan Smedley.
1729 Richard Stewart.
1746 Henry David Petitpierre.
1762 John Rogers.
— Oliver Carter, 1765.
1808 William Henry Irvine.
1810 William Liddiard.
1831 Henry Liddiard.
1853 Edmond Jonas Lewis.
— Thomas Marshall, 1881

Curates.

— James Wills (1826).
1853 Lorenzo Torpey.

RATHBEGGAN.

1594 John Callan.
— One Kevan. (1604).
— James Kean (1622).
1639 Adam Kyan.
1668 Francis Ussher.
1671 James Mandesley.
1678 John Bolton, D.D.
1699 Jonathan Swift.
— Isaac Graham (1774).
1774 Henry Blacker.
1776 Meade Swift.
1782 Thomas Brownrigg.
1792 Joshua Clibborn.
1794 Ponsonby Gouldsbury.
1799 James Elrington.
1805 Rowland Betty.
1811 Henry Moore.
1813 Henry Ormsby.
1817 Henry Crosby.
1818 James Matthews.
1832 John James.
— William Hoyte, 1863.
1864 Brabazon Brunker.

Curate.

1860 Thomas Phibbs.

RATHREGAN.

— Edward Doyle (1622).
1626 John Wilson.
1668 Simon Digby.
1676 Noah Webb.
1678 United to Dunshaughlin.

TRYVETT.

1411 Gregory Neel.
— Richard Mortimer, 1545.
1546 Peter Row.
1558 Edward Rome.
1581 John Brennan.
1614 Baldwin Shepheard.
1630 Thomas Fairfax.
1632 John Lennox.
1668 Simon Digby.
1670 Noah Webb.
1696 Jerome Ryves.
1699 Frank Foulk.
1712 George Blake.
1763 Bigoe Clerk Henzell.
1788 Lord Viscount Strangford.
— Shany Ford (1799).
1801 John Molesworth Staples.
1805 Bigoe Henzell.
1819 John Uniacke Swayne.
1836 Thomas Houston Barton
1862 Thomas Marshall.
1863 J. William Hamerton.

Curate.

1869 W. Hoyte.

KILMORE.

1593 Thomas Tedder.
1604 —— Loftus.
1614 Robert Booning.
1668 Hugh Sterling.
1670 Christopher Kerdiffe.
1675 Adam Ussher.
1680 James Kyan or Ryan.
1682 George Finglasse.
1686 James Duncan.
— Thomas Mallory, 1688.
1688 John Chetwood.
1717 John Smyth.
1740 Hugh Tisdall.
1763 Gerald Macklin.
1784 Hon. William Knox.
1786 John Travers Radcliff.
1814 William Gorman.
1824 Thomas Smith.
1831 Edward Tighe Gregory, LL.D.
1859 Robert Posnett.
1862 William Augustus Kempston.

Curates.

1789 Thomas Radcliff.
— J. Corrigan (1842).
1870 D. C. Campbell.

UNION OF DUNBOYNE.

Consists of Dunboyne and Kilbride.

Dunboyne had Kilbride as a Chapel of Ease in 1622, and as far back as can be traced the two Parishes were united. The Church (SS. Peter and Paul) is modern.

— William Pyrron (1385).
— John de Burgo (1401).
— William Lullyngton (1408).
1576 George Darmot.
1579 Marmaduke Middleton.
1615 John Kyan.
— James Kean (1622).
1633 Edward Stanhope.
1669 John Price.
1683 Edward Hollis.
1684 Thomas Hawley.

1709 Thomas Forbes.
1727 Edward Sampson.
1728 John Jephson.
1730 Thomas Sheridan, D.D.
1734 John Knowles.
1767 Robert Gorges.
1767 Edward Henry Duncan, L.L.D.
1806 Richard John Hamilton.
1823 Richard Martin.
1833 John Aughinleck.
1871 John Cooke.
1881 William John Kingsborough.
1884 James Hamilton.
1888 J. P. Tegart.
1895 Annesley T. Somers.
1908 J. Forde Leathley.

Curates.

— Patrick Lindsay (1693).
— Adam Caulfield (1733).
— Skeffington Preston (1842).
1857 Frederick O'Melia.
1862 James Borbridge Doyle.

RURAL DEANERY OF TRIM.

Union of Trim.

Consists of Trim, Newtown Clonbun, Kilcooley, Scurlogstown, Tullaghanoge, and Moymet.

The Union as at present, excluding Moymet, was formed in 1731. Moymet continued as an independent Parish, though without a church, until the middle of the nineteenth century, when, on the death of John Hussey Burgh, it was suspended. The Church of Trim (St. Patrick) is ancient, but has been often restored. In 1612 the Parish was united to the See of Meath, since which time the bishops have been Rectors, and the officiating clergyman was styled "Vicar."

Trim.

Rectors.

1283 Nicholas de Geneville.
— William de Clebury (1324).
1381 Walter de Brugge.
1403 Richard Petyr.
1412 John Prene.
1432 Patrick Prene.
1435 Robert Dyke.
1454 Philip Norreys, D.D.
1483 Richard Walsh.[6]
1483 Edward Wellisle.[6]
1501 Thomas D'Arcy.
15— John Rycardes.
— James Sheffelde (1527).
1541 Francis Agard.
1542 William Copeland.
1546 William Nugent.
— John Petit.
— Henry Fitzsimon.

[6] Contested appointment.

1581 John Draper.
1601 Robert Draper.
1612 United to Bishopric.

Vicars.

1612 John Tanner.
— John Gregg (1622).
1628 Robert Ivey.
1629 William Griffith or Griffin.
— Jeremy Benton, preacher (1658).
1660 James Carey, preacher.
1666 John Cruikshank, D.D.
1670 John Harper.
1671 Robert Erwin.
1680 George Proud.
1682 John Padmore.
1698 John Sterne.
1702 Anthony Raymond.
1726 Hugh Dawson.
1726 Caleb De Butts.
1732 Adam Lyndon.
1753 Guy Atkinson.
1767 William Evelyn.
1776 William Foster.
1780 William Elliott.
1818 Richard Butler, D.D.
1819 Richard Butler, A.B.
1862 Charles James Bayly.
1869 Edward Fleetwood Berry.
1875 Charles Parsons Reichel, D.D.
1885 Francis Hopkins.
1892 Garrett Nugent.
1898 Edward Goff.

Curates.

1842 James Hamilton.
1859 Thomas Wetherall.
1863 C. Ormsby Wiley.
1865 Benjamin Irwin.
1868 Alfred T. Harvey.
1872 John G. Manghan.
1875 F. Samuels.
1878 Samuel Sandys.
1881 Anthony Drought.
1884 Edward Martyn Venn.
1892 Joseph John Nesbitt.

NEWTOWN CLONBUN.

— Robert Booning (1622)
1666 John Crookshank, D.D.
1732 United to Trim.

SCURLOGSTOWN.

Alexander Sharpe (1622).
1666 John Crookshank, D.D.
1670 John Harper.
1732 United to Trim, but
1753 Gerald Macklin.

TULLAGHANOGE.

1622 "Noe curate."
1666 John Crookshank, D.D.
1670 John Harper.
1732 United to Trim.

MOYMET.

1622 "Noe curate."
— William Meoles (1633).
1671 Robert Erwing.
1682 George Proud.
— John Stearne, 1713.
1713 Anthony Raymond, D.D.
1726 George Allcock.
1748 Daniel Beaufort.
1758 Washington Cotes, LL.D.
1762 John Auchmuty.
1793 Thomas Vesey Dawson.
1793 George Alley.
1807 John Hussey Burgh.

PARISH OF RATHCORE.

This Parish was generally held as a Chapel of Ease to Trim, and when the Bishop became Rector of Trim

in 1612, he succeeded also to Rathcore. The Church (St. Ultan) is ancient.

— John Gregg (1622).
1664 Nicholas Proud.
1669 Richard Jones.
1680 John Congreve.
— Anthony Raymond, D.D., 1726.
1726 Hugh Dawson.
1726 Caleb De Butts.
1732 Adam Lyndon.
1753 Guy Atkinson.
1767 William Evelyn.
1776 William or Thomas Foster.
1781 Christopher M'Allister.
— John Kellett (1799).
— Chaworth Brown, 1802.
1802 John Roberts.
1826 Richard Ryan.
1837 James Alexander.
1838 James Matthews.
1863 Robert Irwin.
1876 Gregory St. Laurence Cuffe.
1881 James Edward Harnett Murphy.

Curates.

1727 David Carleton.
— Edward J. Lewis (1826).
1855 Samuel Parsons.
1863 Thomas Wetherell.

Parish of Bective.

Ussher reports in 1622: "This Church belongeth to the Abbey of Bective, in the possession of the said Mr. Dillon (impropriator), who pretendeth to have an exemption from the Lord Bishop's jurisdiction, and doth prove wills and grant administracons." At that time the Church and Chancel were in repair. When the Abbey was allowed to go to ruin, no other church was built for this Parish until the erection of the present building about the middle of the nineteenth century (St. Mary). The records of this Parish are very imperfect.

1622 "Noe curate."
Patrick Griffith (1633).
26 John Grace.
Charles Burton (1902).
1902 Richard Frederick Martin Clifford.
1903 Robert B. Birmingham.

Union of Laracor.

Consists of Laracor, Galtrim, and Derrypatrick.

This Union was formed after disestablishment.

The Church of Laracor (St. Peter) is modern; that of Galtrim (St. Mary) was erected in 1800.

LARACOR.

1551 Andrew Barnwall.
— William Chamberlain, 1564.
1564 John Allen.
1613 Edward Sotherne.
1618 Robert Booning or Bonynge.
1664 Nicholas Proud.
1669 Richard Tennison.
1682 Edward Singe.
1686 Richard Mallory.
1692 John Bolton, D.D.
1699 Jonathan Swift, D.D.
1745 Peter or John Hamon.
1798 Henry Thomas Preston.
1801 Charles Massey.
1804 Charles Warburton.
1806 Joseph Sandys.
1808 John Brinkley, D.D.
1809 Charles Henry Crookshank.
1812 Blaney Irwin.
1850 Quintan Dick Hume.
1854 John Cotter MacDonnell.
1862 Robert Posnett.
1866 Charles Elrington M'Kay
1881 Edward Denny.
1898 W. E. S. Connolly.
1903 Hugh Clement Beere.

Curate.

1722 Stafford Lightburne.

GALTRIM.

— William de la Corner, 1289.
1289 Philip le Norman.
— William de Clera (1292).
1357 Thomas de Meelton.
— Thomas Enel (1399).
— Thomas Bache or Bathe, 1400.
1403 John Swayne.
1425 John Randolf.
— Nicholas Daley (1604).
— James Daley (1622).
1630 John Williams.
1636 Hugh Morrison.
1666 John Crookshank.
1670 Christopher Kerdiffe.
1674 Henry Monypenny.
1675 Marcus Ussher.
1699 Joshua Warren.
1701 Wilfred Lawson.
1717 John Hamilton.
1721 Anthony Lowray, D.D.
1737 John Smith.
1742 David Cope.
1763 William Donellan.
— Mark Tisdall (1789).
1789 Hon. Thomas St. Laurence.
1794 T. Vesey Dawson.
1806 Barry M'Gusty.
1807 William Liddiard.
1814 John Lowe.
1838 Matthew Maine Fox.
1844 Henry Siree.
— Samuel Abraham Walker (1849).
1856 Lorenzo Torpey.
— Thomas Foster (1871).

Curates.

— William Harvy (1693).
1857 Nicholas Magrath.

DIRPATRICK OR DERRYPATRICK.

— James Daley (1622).
— William Meoles (1633).
— William Harvy (1693).
— Anthony Lowry (1733).

Union of Athboy.

Consists of Athboy, Girley, Rathmore, Moyagher, and Kildalkey.

This Union was formed in 1678. About the year 1843 Girley and Kildalkey were separated, and made into perpetual curacies. They have now been again united. The Church of Athboy (St. James) is ancient. Kildalkey Church (St. Mary) was built when the perpetual curacy was established. The record of the building of Girley Church (St. Margaret) is not found. The Archbishops of Armagh were Rectors of Athboy. The following is the succession of Vicars.

Athboy.

1558 John Marriman.
— David Jones (1604)
1617 William Smith.
— George Gemester (1641).
— Samuel Edwards, preacher (1658).
1670 Edmund Greene.
1674 Robert Parkinson.
1713 Thomas Wallis.
1746 Alexander Alcock.
1753 William Gruebere.
1781 Blount Medlicott.
1782 Thomas Benson, D.D.
1784 Henry Wynne.
1797 Samuel Murphy.
1805 Hon. Hamilton Cuffe.
1811 Robert Tronson.
1831 Robert Noble.
1871 Francis Hopkins.
1885 Alfred T. Harvey.
1898 Henry Edward Whyte.

Curates.

— Patrick Lyon (1733).
— J. A. W. Sprule (1842)
1861 J. G. Hopkins.
1870 John Adam Cross.
— Thomas George Irwin (1871).
1906 Geoffrey Wilberforce Tibbs.

Girley.

— William Smith (1622).
1674 Robert Parkinson.
1857 J. F. Bickerdike.
1869 Henry Hare.
1881 Hamilton Hare.

Rathmore.

1536 William Cocks.
1596 Robert Allbright.
— Willbryan Fox (1604).
1616 Benjamin Culme.
1637 William Hudson or Huetson.
1675 Robert Parkinson.
1678 United to Athboy.

Curate.

— Robert Shepley (1622).

Moyagher.

— William Smyth (1622).
1678 United to Athboy.

Kildalkey.

Robert Booning (1622).
1678 United to Athboy.

Perpetual Curates.

1843 William Irwin.
1849 William Hutchinson.

1865 Graham Graig.
— Thomas George Irwin, 1872.
1873 Charles M. Brown.
1875 Solomon K. F. Ralph.
1893 William F. Legge.
1897 J. Frazer Pillor.
1906 United to Athboy.

Parish of Killochonnigan.

The Church (St. Kineth) was consecrated in 1823.

— Alexander Sharpe (1622).
— Philip Johnston (1733).
— Arthur Connolly (1799).
1817 Joseph Greene.
1847 Henry Purdon Disney.
1853 Orlando Thomas Dobbin, LL.D.
1874 John Evans Preston.
1884 Anthony Drought.
1892 Richard J. Merrin.

Union of Navan.

Consists of Navan, Ardsallagh, Donaghmore, Athlumney, and Follistown.

The Parishes of Donaghmore and Ardsallagh were united to Navan in the seventeenth century. Athlumney was a separate vicarage, though without a church, until the death of the Rev. R. P. D. Hamilton in 1870. Navan Church (St. Mary) was built in 1818.

Navan.

1460 Doctor Stackbolle.
— William Phillips (1615).
1633 Robert Puttock.
— Richard Bourk, preacher (1658).
1658 Jonathan Edwards, preacher.
1660 John Kerdiff or Cardiffe.
1671 William Smith.
1682 Thomas Benson.
1715 John Lyon.
1718 Ossory Medlicott.
1728 John Grace.
1737 George Buchanan.
1743 James Cavendish.
1747 Daniel Cornelius Beaufort.
1765 Daniel Augustus Beaufort.
1818 Philip Barry.
1882 Robert Thompson.
1857 Charles James Lambert.
1879 James Bennett Keene.
1897 John Rennison.

Curates.

1798 George Brabazon.
— James Moreton (1826).
— William Hamerton (1842)
1857 William Chartres.
1859 J. Butler.
1875 Hill Wilson White.
1893 Samuel Handy Somers.
1900 Harry de Vere White.

Ardsallagh.

— Edward ffennor (1622).
— Edmund Greene (1674).
1674 William Smith.

DONAGHMORE.

— Richard Burel (1345).
1560 Patrick Dongan.
1614 Thomas White.
1623 Roger Puttock.
1675 Richard Tennison.
1677 William Smith.
1682 Thomas Benson.

ATHLUMNEY.

— Cornelius Cahan (1549).
1620 John Sayler.
— Patrick Griffith (1622).
1629 Samuel Clarke.
1641 John Bodkin.
1677 William Smyth.
1684 Thomas Benson.
1684 Benjamin Colcot.
1715 John Lyan.
1715 Dive Downes.
1719 Ossory Medlicott.
1728 John Grace.
— P. Downes (1733).
1737 George Buchanan.
1744 James Cavendish.
1747 Daniel Beaufort.
1781 Richard Barry.
1788 George Charles Garnett.
— Daniel Beaufort, 1789.
1789 Daniel Augustus Beaufort.
1819 Francis Dansey Hamilton.
1831 Robert Thompson.
1832 Robert Patrick Dansey Hamilton.
1870 United to Navan.

FOLLISTOWN.

— Walter Mooney (1622).

UNION OF ARDBRACCAN.

Consists of Ardbraccan, Liscartan, Rataine, Clonmacduff, Churchtown, and Martry.

This Union was formed in 1780. The Church (St. Ultan) was built in 1777.

ARDBRACCAN.

— William de Clera (1292).
1403 Richard Hill.
1494 William Downyll.
— James Trench (1615).
— Robert Nicholls (1622).
— William Meoles (1633).
1681 Henry Cottingham.
1681 John Chetwood.
— Lewis Gillardy.
1703 Rowland Singleton.
1741 Lewis Gaillardy.
1751 William Tisdall.
1770 William Foster.
1780 Richard Moore.
1818 Hon. Henry Pakenham.
1843 John Brownlow.
1882 Duncan J. Brownlow.
1899 Launcelot Coulter.

Curates.

— Michael Egan (1826).
1854 Robert Stoney.
1857 Samuel Parsons.
1859 William Cotton Ringwood.
1878 Harry de Vere Dawson White.
1880 John Dickson Eccles Newcombe.
1880 James Francis Caithness.
1868 John M'Gregor Ward.

LISCARTAN.

1401 John Taaf.
— Martin White, 1438.
— James Trench (1622).
1630 George Cottingham.
1632 John Hoskins.
1638 Samuel Boden.
1670 Henry Cottingham.
1681 Michael Jones.
1682 John Chetwood.
1703 Rowland Singleton.
1730 United to Ardbraccan.

RATAINE.

1622 "Noe curate."
1666 John Crookshanke, D.D.
1670 John Finglasse.
1670 John Harper.
1681 John Chetwood.
1730 United to Ardbraccan.

CLONMACDUFF.

1622 "Noe curate."
1633 Robert Puttock.
1666 John Crookshank, D.D.
1670 John Harper.
1671 John Finglasse.
1682 George Proudi
1692 John Stearne.
1703 Anthony Raymond.
1725 Aeneas M'Mullen.
1726 Robert Stephenson.
1738 Philip Dixon.
1770 William Evelyn, D.D.
1776 Richard Moore.

CHURCHTOWN.

1622 "Noe curate."
1681 John Chetwood.
1730 United to Ardbraccan.

MARTRY.

— John de Dubiltum (1263)
— William Davyes (1622).
1641 William Meoles.
1682 John Chetwood.
1730 United to Ardbraccan.

PARISH OF RATHMOLYON.

The Church (St. Michael) was built in 1797.

— Thomas Schell, 1546.
1546 Thomas Fleaming.
1616 John Gregg.
1629 William Meoles.
1664 Nicholas Proud.
1670 Richard Jones.
1688 Joshua or John Warren.
1701 William Tyrrell.
1734 George Dobson or Dawson.
1778 Conway Benning, D.D.
1823 Samuel Magee.
1873 Frederick William Wetherell.
1903 Thomas Anderson.

Curates.

1861 Samuel A. Brennan.
1869 Edmund Ireland Armstrong.
1864 Thomas Lindsay.
1868 Thomas Foster.

RURAL DEANERY OF FORE.

PARISH OF OLDCASTLE OR CLOTYN.

The Church (St. Bridget) was built in 1816.

— Nicholas Agone, alias Smyth (1622).
1639 Henry Purdon.
1662 Hugh Hannah.
1679 John Lawry.
1686 James Maxwell.
1721 Edward Thompson.
1723 Dive Downes.
1756 Dive Downes.
1800 Thomas Frederick Knipe.
1834 Henry H. J. Westby, D.D.
1840 Thomas Garde Durdin.[1]
1890 Frederick J. Grierson.

Curate.

— Nicholas J. Halpin (1826)

UNION OF LOUGHCREW.

Consists of Loughcrew, Diamor, Moylough, and Russagh.

Moylough and Diamor were united to Loughcrew in 1682; Clonabreny or Russagh in 1815. The Church (St. Keiran) is modern, and on a new site.

LOUGHCREW.

— Alexander Plunkett (1622).
1630 Jocelyn Ussher.
1664 Richard Dudell.
— Richard Wode 1676.[2]
1692 Charles Proby.
1726 John Willoughby.
1737 John Gibbin.
1740 Hanover Sterling.
1752 Nathaniel Preston.
1784 John Arthur Preston.
1798 Moore Smith.
1814 Robert King.
1815 Richard B. Vincent.
1834 Thomas O'Rorke.
1854 James Alexander Hamilton.
1886 John Quarry Day.

Curates.

— Creagh Code (1818).
— Robert Battersby (1826).

MOYLOUGH.

— Robert Travers (1622).

[1] A remarkable example of long incumbencies. From the appointment of the elder Dive Downes, in 1723, to the resignation of Mr. Durdin in 1890, there were only five vicars, and this, notwithstanding the short incumbency of Canon Westby, which only lasted six years.

[2] There is a tombstone in the old Church to the memory of "Richard Wode, Mount Wode, Vicar of Loughcrew, who died November, 1676," but at that date Dudell is known to have been in possession of the vicarage. Possibly Wode was before Dudell, and resigned the vicarage sometime before his death.

1624 Robert Ussher.
1664 Richard Dudle.
1682 United to Loughcrew.

DIAMOR.

— James Areskin (1622).
1630 William Griffin.
1670 Thomas Bladen, D.D.
1682 United to Loughcrew.

CLONABRANEY OR RUSSAGH.

— Oliver Plunkett (1622).
1664 Richard Dudle.
1665 Robert Barthrem.[1]
1727 John Willoughby.
1737 John Gibbin.
1740 Hanover Sterling.
1814 Robert King.
1815 United to Loughcrew.

UNION OF KILLEAGH.

Consists of Killeagh and Kilbride-Castlecor.

This Union was made in 1885. Killeagh Church (St. Fiach) was built in 1810; Castlecor Church (St. Brigid) in 1808.

KILLEAGH.

— Alexander Plunkett (1622).
1664 Richard Dudle.
1665 Robert Barthrem.
1682 United to Loughcrew.
1809 Thomas O'Rorke.
1834 Union with Loughcrew dissolved.
1834 Robert Battersby.
1874 Henry William Matthews
1886 Robert Butler.
1906 H. F. Hill de Vere White.

Curates.

— Joseph Green (1810).
1870 James Alexander Hamilton.
1882 Sterling De Courcy Williams.

KILBRIDE-CASTLECOR.

— John Fitz Johns (1615).
— John Agone (1622).
1628 William Griffin.
1631 David Thom or Thomas.
1639 Hugh Morrison.
1662 Hugh Hannah.
1679 Joshua Broomhead.
1680 John Lawry.
1686 James Maxwell.
1720 Edward Thompson.
1723 Dive Downes.
1756 Dive Downes.
1800 Thomas Frederick Knipe.
— Thomas O'Rorke (1814).
1834 William Betty.
1845 James Adams.
1885 United to Killeagh.

Curates.

— Thomas Tomlinson (1842).
1860 Elliott A. Knipe.

[1] According to *First Fruits Returns*, but Dudell was at this date in possession of the benefice.

Union of Rathgraffe.

Consists of Rathgraffe, Fore, Faghly, and Faughalstown.

The original Union, formed in 1676, consisted of Rathgraffe, Lickbla, Faughalstown, Mayne, Foyran, St. Mary's and St. Fechin's of Fore, and Kilpatrick. Mayne and Foyran were then served by perpetual curates, appointed by the Incumbent of the Union. In 1905 the present union was made, Lickbla and Foyran being transferred to Mayne. The Church of Rathgraffe or Castlepollard (St. Michael) was erected in 1821.

Rathgraffe or Taleard.

— John Drynan (1615).
1621 Thomas Greaves.
1665 Thomas Fitzsimons, 1725
1725 George Alcock.
1730 Robert Lestrange.
1747 Stafford Lightburne.
1751 Stafford Lightburne, jun.
1760 Patrick Moore.
1762 Hon. George Maitland.
1764 George or John Wynne.
1781 George Coates.
1802 Chaworth Brown.
1847 William Eames.
1869 George Kirkpatrick.
1873 Robert Allen.
1890 Richard Smyth.
1905 Anthony Drought.

Curates.

— Michael Egan (1818).
— Richard F. Handy (1826)
— Adolph F. Drought (1842)
1864 James Field.
1886 William Henry Roper.
1904 Henry Airay Watson.

Fore.

— Patrick Agone (1622).
1665 Thomas Fitzismons.
1776 United to Rathgraffe.

Faghly.

1376 Maurice M'Ynwhar.
— Richard King, 1407.
1407 Nicholas Moynagh.
15— Bernard O'Daly.
— Thomas Greaves (1622).
1665 Thomas Fitzsimons.
1776 United to Rathgraffe.

Faughalstown.

No record.

Union of Mayne.

Consists of Mayne, Lickbla, and Foyran.

This Union was formed in 1805. The Church of Mayne (St. Nicholas) was erected in 1806. Foyran Church (St. Hugh) was built a short time before disestablishment, and was consecrated in 1875.

Mayne.

1615 Cadwalader Edwards.
1621 William Sibthorpe.
1624 John Goldsmith.

1630 Thomas Dovile.
1665 Thomas Fitzsimons.
1802 Chaworth Brown.
1809 Richard Vavasour.
— Bond Hall (1810).
— Charles Burton.
1822 Thomas Smith.
— William Sturrock, 1832.
1832 Richard Fleming Hardy.
1860 George Kirkpatrick.
1869 C. C. Mulloy.
1894 James Hamilton.
1906 Robert Butler.

Curates.

— John Agone (1622).
1875 Robert Henry Durham.
1878 Edward Montgomery Moore.
1882 John M'Arthur Macmillan, LL.D.
1887 William Henry Roper.
1896 Frederick William Knight.

LICKBLA.

1422 Thomas Rydell.
1541 Richard Hurford.
1560 Thaddeus M'Gilla.
1608 John Drynan.
1621 William Sibthorpe.
1624 John Goldsmith.
1665 Thomas Fitzsimons.
1776 United to Rathgraffe.
1905 United to Mayne.

Curate.

— John Agone (1622).

FOYRAN OR FAVORAN.

1632 John Goldsmith.
1776 United to Rathgraffe.
1905 United to Mayne.

Curates.

1859 H. M. Kilbride.
1862 Richard Booth.
1866 Coote C. Molloy.
1872 John Reade West.

UNION OF COLLINSTOWN.

Consists of Collinstown and Kilpatrick.

Collinstown was part of the Parish of Fore until 1843, when a church was built (St. Feighan) and a perpetual curacy endowed by the late Mr. Smyth of Barbavilla.

COLLINSTOWN.

1843 Charles James Bayly.
— John E. Trench, 1851.
1851 Richard Dowse.
1865 Edward Newland.
— Hamilton Haire, 1872.
— Arthur Newburgh Haire, 1874.
1874 Daniel James Hearn.
1875 E. Singleton.
1876 Edward Goff.
1886 James Staunton, D.D.
1894 George H. Patton.
1905 G. R. L. Wynne.

KILPATRICK.

— Alexander Plunkett (1622).
1665 Thomas Fitzsimons.
1776 United to Rathgraffe.

Union of Drumcree.

Consists of Kilcumney, Killulagh, and Disertale.

This Union was formed in 1818. The Church (St. John) was built in 1811.

Drumcree or Kilcumney.

— Alexander Plunkett (1622).
1665 Robert Barthrem.
— Humphrey Leigh (1674).
1681 William Lightburne.
1702 John Hill.
1751 Francis Thompson, D.D.
1776 Edward Reynell.
1788 Humphrey French, D.D.
1788 Edward Story.
1792 John M'Causland.
1808 Michael De Courcey, D.D.
1860 Cecil Russell.
1872 Richard Archdall Byrn.
1896 Samuel H. Somers.
1901 Frederick William Knight.

Curates.

1863 Robert Peel Wadsworth.
1866 Richard Booth.
1870 Arthur Robinson Barton
1891 Robert Thomas Byrn.

Killulagh.

— Thomas Chantrell, 1400.
1400 Nicholas Rede.
— Richard O'Brayn, 1402.
1402 Denis O'Brayn.
1406 James Nugent.
1559 John Tute.
1617 Thomas Greaves.
1665 Robert Barthrem.
1667 William or Humphrey Leigh.
1684 Samuel Hudson.
1729 Jeremiah Walsh.
1818 United to Drumcree.

Disertale.

1667 William or Humphrey Leigh.

RURAL DEANERY OF CLONARD.

Union of Clonard.

Consists of Clonard and Killyon.

This Union was formed in 1782. The Church (St. Finnen) was built in 1821.

Clonard.

1565 Morianus O'Carbrie.
1589 Richard Steede.
1615 Thomas Robinson.
1619 Alexander Sharpe.
1665 Charles Sharpe.
1669 Eugene Reyley.
1670 Alexander Norris.
1722 Caleb De Butts.
1726 Hugh Dawson.
1732 George Blake or Black.
1762 John Jones.
1763 Stephen Bootle.
1770 St. George Ashe.

1799 Hon. George Theobald Bourke.
1815 Thomas or Francis Sutton.
1818 George Brabazon.
1822 Edward Nixon.
1836 William Pratt.
1844 James Crawford.
1861 Spencer William Walsh, D.D.
1881 Carter Alexander Gairdner.
1890 William Henry Roper.

Curates.

1722 William Griffith.
1888 Leigh Richmond Hamilton.

KILLYON.

— Miles Pemberton (1622).
1771 St. George Ashe.
1782 United to Clonard.

UNION OF CASTLEJORDAN.

Consists of Castlejordan and Ballyboggan.

This union seems to have been formed at an early date. The Church was built in 1826.

CASTLEJORDAN OR GRENGEDAGH.

— John Ridgwell (1622).
— William Brereton (1693).
— John Gibben (1733).
1747 William Ussher.
1774 Mark Rainsford.
1792 John Digby.
1840 Thomas Marshall.
1862 William John Burke.
1877 Henry Ashe.
1885 William S. Little.
1886 Samuel H. Lewis.
1901 Thomas Anderson.
1903 Henry J. Smith.

Curates.

1870 Thomas Scott.
1878 Edward Morgan Griffin.
1900 Edmund Maurice Gumley.

BALLYBOGGAN.

— Thomas Ridgwell (1622).
1688 James Mandesley.
— William Brereton (1693).

PARISH OF CASTLERICKARD.

This Parish was for a time united to Clonard (1722). The Church (St. Nicholas) is old. Date of building not known.

1389 Thomas Mareschall.
1400 Donald Magluay.
1564 Christopher Gaffeney.
1567 William Darrel.
1572 Robert Draper.
1581 Joseph Greenan.
1606 Myles Pemberton.
1665 Charles Sharp.
1688 Alexander Norris.
1722 Caleb De Butts.
1726 Hugh Dawson.
1732 George Blake, D.D.
1762 John Payne.
1771 Thomas Hopkins.

Henry Wynne.
George Knipe.
Sir Thomas Meredyth.
Arthur Rolleston.
James Elrington.
William Peacocke.
Francis Jones.
Robert Drought.
Francis Davidson (1818).
John Lawler.
Robert Irwin.
1863 John Brandon.
1876 Thomas Heron Aldwell.
1886 Robert C. O'Donoghue.
1907 Oliver W. Walsh.

Curates.

1727 David Carleton.
— Richard Carleton (1733).
1890 Herbert James Spurway.
1897 Alexander Duff Moore.

Parish of Killucan or Rathwire.

The Chapel of Kinnegad was made a perpetual acy in 1791. It was again united to Killucan after establishment. Killucan Church (St. Etchen) was ted in 1816; Kinnegad Church (St. John Baptist) 822.

Killucan.

William Wylde.
Donald Magluay.
William Cockes.
Henry Luttrell (1604).
John Carter (1612) rector.
Nicholas Robinson (1612) vicar.
Edward Donelan.
William Barry.
Henry Dodwell, preacher
Anthony Dopping.
Peter Warburton.
Henry Wynne.
James Alexander.
Cecil Crampton.
William Lyster.
William F. Falkiner.

Curates.

1612 John Bryan.
— Henry Purdon (1693).
— Thomas Bumford (1826).
1851 Francis Marsh.

Kinnegad:

1756 Arthur Newcombe.
1771 Gerald Macklin.
1791 Charles O'Beirne.
1820 Robert Noble.
1831 Charles Gayer.
— Cecil Russell (1841).
1847 John Brandon.
1863 Thomas Wetherell.

Curates.

— Robert Irwin (1842).
1888 Purefoy Poe.
1891 Richard J. Merrin.

RURAL DEANERY OF MULLINGAR.

Parish of Mullingar.

The Church (All Saints) was built in 1813.

William Hammond.
one Dalton (1604).
1617 William Sibthorpe.
1630 Randolph Adams.

1675 James Hierome, D.D.
1679 John Forbes.
1692 Joshua Warren.
1700 Thomas Dobson.
1718 Lewis West.
1725 Edward Thompson.
1746 Arthur Champagne.
1800 Henry Dundas.
1813 Francis Lambert.
1814 Thomas Robinson.
1828 Hon. Henry Montague Brown.
1851 Thomas Woodward.
1856 John Hopkins.
1864 Charles Parsons Reichel, D.D.
1875 Francis Swift.
1892 Robert Seymour, D.D.

Curates.

— William Sturrock (1826).
1865 John George Birch.
1870 Thomas Simpson Jones.
1872 Frederick Simeon Samuels.
1876 James Staunton.
1882 Augustus Theodore Phibbs.
1885 John Hamilton Bourke.
1889 James Henry Rice.
1894 Richard George Salmon King.
1896 George Villiers Jourdan.
1901 Robert B. Birmingham.
1905 Edward Jennings.

Union of Portnashangan.

Consists of Portnashangan, Portloman, Taughmon, and Tyfarnham.

The Union of Portnashangan and Portloman was made in 1803. Taughmon was added after disestablishment. Portnashangan Church (St. Mary), was erected in 1824. Taughmon Church (St. Munna) is a very old building, with a stone roof, and is now only used for occasional services.

Portnashangan.

1615 James Byram.
1631 David Thom.
1665 Walter Melvin or Melvill.
1670 Audeon Reyly.
1692 John or Thomas Dobson.
1717 Abel Marmion.
1717 William Jones.
1718 John Jones.
— William Tyrrell, 1734.
1734 Christopher Pearson.
1745 John Hill.
1751 Francis Thompson.
1776 Samuel Close.
1780 Felix O'Neill.[1]
1780 Zachary Williams.[1]
1785 John Mullock.
1803 John Jephson.
1816 John Thomas Burgh.
1823 John Thomas O'Neill.
1832 Henry Daniel.
1836 James Alexander.
— Noah S. Hickey, 1846.
1846 Charles J. Baily.
1851 John Crofton.

[1] There is evidently a mistake here. Both clergymen are said in the *First Fruits Returns* to have been appointed on the same day. Williams is mentioned in the *Diocesan Registry*, but no mention is made of O'Neill.

1869 Frederick Wetherell.
1872 Colpoys C. Baker.
1881 John Andrew Jennings.
1882 George Richard Purdon.

Curate.

1826 James Brabazon.

PORTLOMAN.

1615 Thomas Kirkby.
— John Mountfield (1622).
— Solomon Morgan (1641).
1665 Walter Melvin.
1670 Audeon Reyly.
1692 Thomas or John Dobson.
1717 Abel Marmion.
1717 William Jones.
1718 John Jones.
— William Tyrrell, 1734.
1734 Christopher Pearson.
1745 John Hill.
1751 Francis Thompson.
1751 Nicholas Tubbs.
1757 Richard Bunworth.
1771 John Jones.
1776 Samuel Close.
1780 Zachary Williams.
1780 Daniel Augustus Beaufort.
1789 George Charles Garnett.
1801 John Jephson.
1816 Thomas Burgh.
1823 United to Portnashangan.

TAUGHMON.

1435 Patrick Cruys.
1615 James Byrom.
— Robert Shipley (1622).
1635 Walter Mooney.
1688 Robert St. Clare.
1693 John Buckhurst.
— Christopher Dixon (1733)
1744 John Parker.
1750 James Sheridan.
1768 James Montgomery.
— Roger Blackball, 1790.
1790 Edward Story.
— Charles Eustace, 1800.
1800 Albert Nesbitt.
1809 Bond Hall.
1845 Noah S. Hickey.

TYFARNHAM.

No record.

PARISH OF RATHCONNELL OR TURIN.

The Church (St. John Baptist) was built in 1798.

1403 James Symond.
1612 James Byram.
1631 David Thom.
1664 Randolph Adams.
1675 James Hierome, D.D.
1676 Henry Greene.
1679 John Forbes.
1693 Joshua Warren.
1701 Thomas Dobson.
1718 Daniel Jackson.
1728 Oliver Brady.
1762 Smyth Loftus.
1779 George Lambart.
1797 John Vignoles.
1800 Francis Pratt Winter.
1819 Henry Hunt.
1820 Richard Ryan.
1826 Richard Crone.
— John W. Rynd, 1835.
1836 Henry Moore.
1842 Graham Philip Crozier.
1853 Robert Cage or Cadge.
1855 John Cowan.
1861 Henry Knox Hutchinson
1881 James Staunton, D.D.
1886 Sterling De Courcy Williams.
1893 Matthew Lord Eaton.
1905 Henry Fyers Crampton.

Curates.

1727 Edward Thompson.
1766 Mr. Newcombe.
1860 G. A. Samuels.

UNION OF DELVIN.

Consists of Delvin, Clonarney, Killallon, and Killua.

Clonarney was united to Delvin in 1821. Killallon and Killua were formed into a Union in 1782. They were joined to Delvin in 1898. Delvin Church (St. Mary) is ancient. Killallon Church (St. John the Evangelist) was built early in the nineteenth century.

DELVIN.

1399 John Mortagh.
1406 William Sylk.
— John Mey, 1444.
— Edward Hatton (1615).
1632 Launcelot Lowther.
1665 Robert Barthrem.
1667 William Leigh.
— Humphrey Leigh (1674).
1685 Samuel Hodson.
1709 Leonard Hodson.
— Samuel Hodson (1720).
1729 Moore Booker.
1758 George Erwing.
1776 Walter Bagot.
1797 Thomas Stephens.
1812 Henry Moore.
1813 Henry Fitzgerald.
1854 Andrew L. Savage.
1856 Edward Batty.
1879 Nicholas Gyles Carew.
1890 Adrian Graves O'Donoghue.

Curates.

— Henry Pourdam (1674).
— Robert H. Dunne (1843).
1898 Thomas Carey.
1900 Henry Minchin Lloyd.

CLONARNEY.

— Edward Hatton (1622)
1681 William Lightburne.
1684 John Read.
1703 John Hill.
— Arthur Reynell, 1784.
1784 Edward Reynell.
1788 Peter Carlton.
1790 Thomas Wildridge Shiel.
1798 Mark Wainwright.
1820 Henry Fitzgerald.
1821 United to Delvin.

KILLALLON.

13— Conrad Westenefield.
— John Okkarwill.[1]
— John Asserby.[1]
— Thomas de Everdon (1398).[1]
— Thomas Plunket (1550).
— Richard Lindsor (1604).
1617 Thomas Greeves.
— Richard Purdam, 1622.
1662 Thomas Bladen, D.D.
1703 Ralph Lambert.
1709 Richard Moreton.
— Thomas Harrison, 1714.
1714 Robert Lestrange.
1730 Hugh Vaughan.
— Hugh Allen (1733).
1766 Joseph Pasley.
1772 Nathaniel Preston.
1796 George Leslie Greesson.
1821 Thomas Westropp.
1822 Richard Hercules Langrishe.
1836 Joshua Darcey.
1850 Anthony Blackburne.
1875 Thomas Rudd.
1898 United to Delvin.

Curates.

— F. R. Sadleir.
1846 John Finnerty.
1870 Edward J. A. Percy.

[1] Disputed election between these three.

KILLUA.

1617 Thomas Greaves.
1665 Robert Barthrem.
1667 William or Humphrey Leigh.
1684 Samuel Hudson.
1693 James Hudson.
1709 Leonard Hudson.
1729 Jeremiah Walsh.
1782 United to Killallon.

UNION OF MOYLISCAR.

Consists of Moyliscar, Lynn, Carrick, Kilbride Veston, Kilbride Pilate, Enniscoffy, and Castlelost.

Moyliscar, Lynn, and Carrick were united in the seventeenth century. Enniscoffy and Kilbride Pilate were united in 1818. The present Union was formed in 1880. Moyliscar Church (St. Nicholas) was built by the late Mrs. Tottenham, and was consecrated in 1880. Castlelost Church (Christ Church) was built in 1815; and Enniscoffy Church in 1818.

MOYLISCAR.

— John Mountfield (1622).
1637 Robert Fullerton.
1666 Edmund Burke.
1692 Alexander Delgarno.
1716 Philip Whittingham, D.D.
1743 Edward Cassady.
1753 George Evans.
1781 Robert Evans.
1809 Meade Dennis.
1840 William Benn.
— John Reed, 1841.
1841 George Morley Dennis.
1844 Robert Agnew Martin.
1875 John Howlin Monsarratt.
1887 Albert Erasmus Crotty.

Curates.

1800 Mr. Robinson.
1881 Patrick Sweeny.
1883 Robert C. O'Donoghue.
1886 Gerald Saunders Atkins.
1887 Andrew Cooper.
1890 John George Hodges.
1893 Henry Nathaniel Joly.
1900 Henry Fyers Crampton.
1905 Bennett Samuel Radcliff
1907 G. Ridley Day.

LYNN.

— Thomas Carpentere, 1400
— John Mulgan, 1422.
1562 Edward Darcy.
— John Mountfield (1622).
1637 Alexander Bayly.
1639 Thomas Carter.
1666 Edmund Burke.

CARRICK.

— Daniel Oge M'Grannell (1622).
1634 Henry Pemberton.
1666 Edmund Burke.
1692 Alexander Delgarno.

KILBRIDE VESTON.

— Danyell Oge M'Grannell (1622).
1692 Alexander Delgarno.
1717 Philip Whittingham.
— William Nesbitt, 1790.
1790 Hemsworth Ussher.
1821 Edward Dowling.
— Edward James Geoghegan (1845).

1867 John Cumming Macdona

KILBRIDE PILATE.

- John Acton (1401).
1401 Geoffrey Applepen.
— Thomas Lisley (1622).
1630 Adam Anderson.
1640 John Pemberton.
1679 James Mill or Mylnes.
1713 William Percival.
1764 Joseph Pasley.
1766 Theophilus Roberts.
1780 Robert Ross.
1791 Thomas Robinson.
1815 John Hales.
1818 United to Enniscoffy.

ENNISCOFFY OR CUMSCOFFY.

— John Mountfield (1622).
1717 Philip Whittingham, D.D.
1780 Robert Ross.
1791 Thomas Robinson.
1815 John Hales.
— Edward Batty (1821).
1827 Henry Daniel.
1832 John Reed.
1841 George Morley Dennis.

CASTLELOST.

— Daniel Oge M'Grannell (1622).
16— James Mylner.
1713 William Percival.
1734 Michael M'Kinlie
1764 Launcelot Low.
1772 Samuel Preston.
1777 Thomas Stratford.
— Robert M'Asky, 1801.
1801 Samuel Lucas.
— Thomas Gore, 1805.
1805 John Yeats.
1850 Gustavus Warner.

Curate.

— Barry C. Brown (1842).

UNION OF CLONFADFORAN.

Consists of Clonfadforan and Vastina.

This Union was made in 1887. Clonfadforan Church (St. Sinanus) was erected in 1828; Vastina Church (St. Brigid) in 1808.

CLONFADFORAN.

— Myles Pemberton (1622).
1679 James Mill or Mylnes.
1713 William Percival.
1734 William Moneypenny.
1743 Michael M'Kinlay.
1764 Joseph Pasley.
1766 Henry Goldsmith.
1768 Elias Handcock.
1771 Robert Leavens.
1783 Hemsworth Ussher.
1821 William Eames.
1847 Cecil Russell.
1860 Robert Healy.
1864 Richard Dowse.
1900 Nathaniel S. Joly.

Curates.

1887 Francis John Stopford Mouritz.
1889 James Leonard Poe.
1891 Charles Sinclair.
1892 James W. M'Ginley.
1901 Alfred Ernest Leigh Stuart.
1905 Walter Henry Townsend Gahan.

VASTINA.

1401 John Acton.
1401 Geoffrey Appelpen.
— Thomas Lisley (1622).

1637 John Crawford.
1663 Neptune Blood.
1675 Henry Fitzgerald.
1680 James Mylnes.
1712 John Shadwell.
1724 George Marlay.
1735 Thomas White, D.D.
1769 Launcelot Low, D.D.
1784 Philip Homan.
1802 James Clewloe.
1809 Thomas Robinson.
1828 Henry Rochford.
1843 Richard B. Booth.
1844 John Francis Battersby.
1877 Arthur Gough Gubbins.
1879 Edward P. Riddall.
1883 Henry Seddall, LL.D.

Curate.

1874 H. W. Butler.

Union of Ardnurcher.

Consists of Ardnurcher, Kilcumreagh, and Kilbeggan.

Ardnurcher and Kilcumreagh were united at an early date, probably in the sixteenth century. Kilbeggan was added to the Union after disestablishment. Ardnurcher Church was built in 1822; Kilbeggan (St. Beccan) in 1764.

Ardnurcher.

— William de Geinville (1260).
1400 Malachy Maccochlan.
— William Nugent, 1547.
1547 Dermod O'Mollan.
1556 Patrick O'Molane.
1571 John Mulrony.
1589 Robert Draper.
1607 Thomas Pillen.
1607 John Darling.
1615 Thomas Pillen.
1625 Richard Prise.
1660 Neptune Blood.
1662 William Smith.
1682 William Morgan.
1692 Nicholas Knight.
1693 John King.
1730 Benjamin Hawkshaw.
1740 Michael M'Kinlie.
1765 William Walsh.
1771 Philip Homan.
1802 Hemsworth Ussher.
1821 George Leslie Gresson.
1843 John Lever.
1862 Garrett Nugent.
1873 Joseph Morley Dennis.
1876 A. Beatty.
1879 Walter Riddall.
1880 George Samuel Greer.
1886 Thomas Heron Aldwell.
1888 James Hamilton.
1894 Francis J. S. Mouritz.

Curates.

1857 Jonathan Harding.
1860 Peter Marsh.

Kilbeggan.

1400 Patrick Magayga.
— John Stearne (1622).
— Thomas Fleetwood (1641)
1691 —— Griffith.[1]
— William Harvie.[1]
— Robert Pakenham, 1745.
1745 Herbert Bowen.
1764 James or John Elrington.
1801 William Marshall.
1831 Edward Wilson.

Curates.

— Mr. Walsh (1822).
1870 J. B. Smith.

[1] Disputed election.

Union of Newtown Fertullagh.

Consists of Newtown Fertullagh and Rahugh.

The Church was erected in 1834. There are no separate records of Rahugh.

1608 Thomas Pilne or Pillen.
1625 George Southwick.
1626 William Moorehead.
— James Carey, preacher (1658).
1688 James Mylne.
1713 William Percival.
1714 Thomas Monck.
— John Shadwell, 1724.
1724 George Marlay.
1736 Thomas White.
1769 Herbert Bowen.
1781 Thomas Gore.
1805 John Yeats.
1811 Henry Rochford.
1811 Charles Vignoles, D.D.
1843 Samuel Despard.
1847 William Drought.
1854 Joseph Morgan Daly.
1864 Robert Healy.
1865 William Izod O'Connor.
1889 Oliver W. Walsh.
1899 J. W. M'Ginley.

Curates.

1727 Andrew Jameson.
1862 Samuel A. Brennan.
1863 Edward S. Radcliff.

Union of Clara.

Consists of Clara and Lemanaghan.

Clara was formerly a Chapel of Ease to Ardnurcher. It was formed into a perpetual curacy in 1808, at which time Lemanaghan was united to it. The Church (St. Brigid) was built early in the nineteenth century.

Clara or Kilbridetangan.

1809 Francis Jones.
1810 Skelton Gresson.
1853 William Peter Turpin.
— Hugh J. Flynn, 1872.
1872 Frederick W. Macnamara.
1906 James Hamilton.

Curates.

1851 John Maurice Gillington.
1870 Robert Healy.
1899 Hugh Clements Beere.
1904 Lewis H. Macnamara.
1905 Patrick Percival O'Sullivan.

Lemanaghan.

1634 Thomas Astbrooke.
1662 Robert Sandes.
1670 George Lauder.
1732 John Antrobus.

Parish of Ballyboy.

This was a Chapel of Ease to Fercall. The Church (St. Cormac) was built in 1815.

1617 Neale Molloy.
1641 John Stenne.
— Thomas Coffy, preacher (1658).

1757 Richard Bunworth.
— John Burton (1818).
— Charles Burton (1842).
— W. George Harman (1842).
1848 Henry Carleton.
1857 Amand du Bourdieu.
— Thomas B. Harpur, 1875.
1875 Arthur Gough Gubbins.
1877 James Cullen.
1879 James Bennett Keene.
1879 John Healy, LL.D.
1886 James Todd, LL.D.
1888 John Alfred Forde.
1890 J. Wybrants Johnston.
1904 A. E. L. Stuart.

Curate.

1892 James Clarke.

Parish of Killoughey.

This Parish represents the old Parish of Fercall, which included Killoughey, Rahan, Lynally, Ballyboy, Eglish, and Drumcullen. The Church (St. Eoughy) was built in 1818.

1615 Charles Dun.
1617 Neale or Nolan Mulloy.
1641 Richard Washington.
1665 Thomas Coffy.
1692 Thomas Hamilton.
— Joseph Placett (1694).
— Richard Taylor, 1728.
1728 Daniel Jackson.
1773 Charles Coote.
1796 Thomas Kemmis.
1827 Ralph Coote.
1868 Maxwell Henry Coote.
1905 Lewis H. Macnamara.

Curates.

1810 Peter Roe.
— John Kinahan (1818).
— John Dunne (1824).
— Charles Burton (1842).
— W. George Harman (1842)
1881 F. W. Knox.
1896 George A. Earle.
1898 Alexander Duff Moore.
1904 Arthur Reginald Burris.

Union of Eglish.

Consists of Eglish and Drumcullen.

Eglish Church (St. James) is old, date unknown.

Eglish.

— Joseph or Thomas Barnes (1818).
— Robert Healy (1842).
1869 Augustus F. G. Bluett
1896 Hamlet McClenaghan.
1897 Philip Graydon Tibbs.
1902 William Thomas Stewart.
1906 Robert Francis Shirley.

Drumcullen.

1548 Rory O'Conebagh.
1550 Rory O'Lonem.
— Charles Burton (1824).

Union of Kilnegarenagh.

Consists of Kilnegarenagh and Rahan.

This Union was made after disestablishment. Kilnegarenagh Church was built in 1830. Rahan, formerly one of the Chapels of Fercall, was made a perpetual curacy in 1810. The Church is a very ancient and interesting structure, part with stone roof, probably dating from before the Anglo-Norman Invasion. There are also the well preserved ruins of a twelfth century church, with handsome doorway.

Kilnegarenagh.

— Thomas Astbrooke (1639)
1732 John Antrobus.
1736 John Owens, D.D.
1744 Sir Philip Hoby, Bart.
1748 Henry Coghlan.
1797 Henry Maxwell.
1802 Henry Mahon.
1838 Michael Egan.
1864 Robert H. Dunne.
1883 J. Vignoles Brabazon.
1890 George Alexander Nicolls

Curates.

— James Dom. Burton (1818).
— James P. Holmes (1824).
1864 Edward Newland.

Rahan.

1550 Rory O'Brien.
1616 Charles Dun.
1624 Richard Prise.
1812 Francis Evans.
1823 Charles Bury Turpin.
— J. Vignoles Brabazon (1883).
1883 United to Kilnegarenagh

Curates.

1856 Maxwell Henry Coote.
1857 Tobias De Rome Bolton.
1860 Thomas Mason.
1861 Andrew T. Labatt.

Parish of Durrow.

The Church (St. Columba) is old, and was partially rebuilt in 1802.

— Robert Shepley (1622).
1754 Thomas Bambrick.
1755 George Jackson.
— Thomas Falknor (1799).
— Edward Pepper, 1815.
1815 Arthur Champagne.
1816 Cuthbert Fetherstone.
1823 John Lever.
1830 Peter Toler.
1847 Joseph Chapman.
1876 Richard Smyth.
1885 Oliver Joseph Tibeaudo.
1893 Stirling De Courcey Williams.

Union of Tullamore.

Consists of Kilbride and Lynally.

Tullamore was formerly a Chapel of Ease to Durrow, but at an early period was formed into a separate Parish. It became a Rectory by the purchase of the tithes by a grant from the Evans Fund. The Church (St. Catherine) was built in 1818. After disestablishment, the parish of Lynally was joined to Tullamore, and a beautiful new Church (St. Bartholomew) was built there in 1887 by the bequest of Captain Howard Bury and the gift of Lady Emily Bury.

Kilbride Tullamore.

— Philip Dickson (1748).
1755 George Jackson.
— Francis Grant, 1758.
1770 William Stoney.
1779 James Maxwell.
1799 Ponsonby Gouldsbury.
1830 John Lever.
1843 Edward Fleetwood Berry.
1861 John Swift Joly.
1869 Graham Craig.
1902 Robert Stewart Craig.

Curates.

— William Eames (1818).
— Joseph Meredyth (1826).
1856 A. T. Macnamara.
1859 Henry Burrows.
1860 Walter T. Turpin.
1862 William Johnstone Sargent.
1865 Usher B. Mills.
1872 John C. Low.
1869 John Rennison.
1874 Peter Wilson.
1876 William Wilson.
1878 Henry James Ringwood.
1882 Stephen Thomas Penny.
1883 William Warnock Smith.
1884 Stewart Emerson Cooney.
1902 Herbert Newcome Craig.
1905 Horace Sterling Townsend Gahan.
1907 Cecil Thomas Rennison.

Lynally.

1536 —— O'Molloy.
1550 Dermicus O'Dongin.
1617 Neale Molloy.
1641 Richard Washington.
1665 Thomas Coffy.
— Neal Carolan (1693).
1769 Quintan Finlay.

Curates.

1859 Walter T. Turpin.
1861 Henry Walter Butler.

RURAL DEANERY OF LOUGHSUEDY.

Union of Loughsuedy.

Consists of Ballymore, Killare, and Drumraney.

Ballymore and Killare were united at an early date. The Church (St. Owen) was built in 1826. After

disestablishment the Parish of Drumraney was divided between this Parish, Ballyloughloe, and Kilkenny West. The Church was built in 1811, but is now disused.

BALLYMORE.

— Nicholas de Clera (1289).
1401 Donald Magluay.
— Maurice O'Kennedy (1406)
1425 Andrew O'Casey.
— John Coffey, 1546.
1546 Richard Bermingham.
— Richard Walsh, 1549.
— Robert Fullerton, preacher (1658).
— William Piers (1723).
— Thomas Lennox (1733).
— Stephen Booth (1746).
— Alexander Mackilwain, 1764.
1773 Charles Kelly.
1782 Edward Donovan.
1827 John Falloon.
1865 James A. Bell.
1873 Edward P. Riddall.
1874 O. J. Tibeaudo.
1890 Andrew Cooper.

Curates.

1857 William Henderson.
1862 Lewis R. Hearn.

DRUMRANEY.

1560 Bryan O'Connoyle.
— John Ankers (1622).
1628 Mark Linche.
1629 Richard Price.
1664 John Stevens.
1682 Henry Greene.
1731 John Travers.
— William Maxwell, 1800.
1811 James Alexander.
— —— Benson, 1821.
1821 William Battersby.
John F. Battersby.
1822 Creagh Code.
Donelan Bolingbroke Seymour (1845).
Richard Butler Bryan, 1847.
1847 James Alexander Crozier.

UNION OF FORGNEY.

Consists of Forgney and Noughaval.

Both these Parishes were formerly Chapels of Ease to Ballymore. They were held with Ballymore by the Bishop of Meath, but were disappropriated from the See in 1844. Forgney Church (St. Munis) was built in 1810.

— Donald Magluay, 1401.
1401 Thomas Magluay.
1800 James Moffatt.
1840 Hill Wilson.
1872 Henry Seddall, LL.D.
1883 Edward Morgan Griffin.
1894 James H. Rice.
1898 O. W. Walsh.
1907 Francis J. A. Beere.

Curates.

1851 Stephen Radcliff.
1857 Lorenzo Torpey.

NOUGHAVAL.

No record.

Union of Kilkenny West.

Consists of Kilkenny West and Bunowen.

These Parishes were united after disestablishment. Kilkenny West Church is dedicated to St. Canice. Bunowen Church was built in 1818.

Kilkenny West.

1608 John Ankers.
— Charles Goldsmith, 1747.
1747 John Wynne.
1782 William Bryan.
— Philip Bertles, 1785.
1790 James Saurin.
1809 William Bryan.
1815 Richard Butler Bryan.
1822 Richard George.
1848 James A. Crozier.
1860 Newport Benjamin White.
1870 John Rennison.
1876 George F. Courtenay.
1876 Richard Smyth.
1890 Edward Martyn Venn.

Curates.

1800 Samuel Robinson.
1806 Samuel Pool.
1870 William Shaw Darley.

Bunowen.

1823 John Gordon Caulfield.
1826 Thomas Gordon Caulfield.
— John Francis Battersby.
1844 Donelan Bolingbroke Seymour.
1852 David Robert Bleakley.

Union of Almoritia.

Consists of Almoritia, Piercetown, Templepatrick, Rathconrath, Churchtown, and Conry.

Almoritia and Piercetown were united in 1840. Rathconrath was a separate Parish until disestablishment, and Churchtown until 1875. The only Church now in use is Almoritia (St. Nicholas), which was built in 1816.

Almoritia or Ballymoran.

— Charles Dun, LL.D. (1615).
1617 William Moorehead.
1630 Randolph Adams.
— Thomas Fleetwood (1641)
1665 Randolph Adams.
1675 William Jones.
1675 Alexander Norris.
1722 Robert Meares.
1730 Benjamin Hawkshaw.
1738 Currell Smyth.
1770 Charles Woodward.
1772 Richard Norris, D.D.
1784 Bartholomew Lutley Sclator.
— James Irwine, 1811.
1811 Samuel Williams.
1813 James Hamilton.
1841 James Brabazon.
1885 H. Vere White.

1888 Francis Thomas Caldwell
1898 Charles Edward Hardy
1902 Hamlet McClenaghan.
1905 James Frazer Pillor.

Curates.

— John Macefield (1615).
— John Falloon (1824).

PIERCETOWN.

— James Areskin (1622).
1630 Randolph Adams.
1675 James Hierome, D.D.
1683 John Twells.
1730 Benjamin Harshaw.
1738 Currel Smith.
1813 United to Almoritia.

TEMPLEPATRICK OR MOYVORE.

William Moorehead (1622).

RATHCONRATH.

1574 —— Dalton.
— James Areskin (1615).
1630 Randolph Adams.
1688 Miles Sweny.
1692 John Twelves.
1696 Nicholas Knight.
1730 Benjamin Hawkshaw.
1738 Currell Smith.
1748 Michael M'Kinley.
1765 William Ould or Field, D.D.
1811 George Frederick Potter.
1837 Brabazon Joseph Grant.

Curate.

1727 Thomas Lemon.

CHURCHTOWN.

— Thomas Lisley (1622).
1630 Randolph Adams.
1637 John Crawford.
1675 James Hierome, D.D.
1683 John Twells.
1722 Robert Mears.
1733 Stafford Lightburne.
1747 James Ross.
1762 Arthur Reynell.
1784 Roger Forde.
1831 James Matthews.
1838 John Low.
1839 Robert H. Dunne.
1864 Joseph Morgan Daly.
1872 Robert Henry Durham.
1875 T. Basil Anderson.

Curate.

William Drought (1842).

CONRY.

No record.

UNION OF LENEY.

Consists of Leney, Lacken, Templeoran, Stonehall, Multifarnham, and Dysart.

The Union of Leney consisted of Leney, Tyfernan, Templeoran, and Kilmacnevin. The last is now united to Kilbixy. Stonehall, Multifarnham, and Dysart were added after disestablishment. Dysart was formerly united to Churchtown. The date of Leney Church is not known; Stonehall Church (St. John Baptist) dates from 1809.

— Henry Parr (1622).
— Robert Lorky, preacher (1658).
— Francis Gouldsbury. 1759.
1760 Thomas Mears.

— William Gorman (1799).
— Ponsonby Gouldsbury (1799).
1808 Daniel Ward.
1849 Thomas Hanley Ball.
— Thomas M'Mahon, 1856.
1856 Alexander Braddell.
1878 Richard Stuart Dobbs Campbell.
1888 John Rennison.
1897 Francis Thomas Caldwell.

Curate.

1860 John Carroll.

LACKEN.

No record.

TEMPLEORAN.

No record.

STONEHALL.

— Gilbert Purdon (1615).
— John Mountfield (1622).
— Christopher Dixon (1733)
— Abel Marmion, 1734.
1734 Oliver Brady.
1764 James Sheridan.
1771 William Nixon.
1813 Robert Lockwood.
1820 John Young.
1830 Bond Hall.
— Jackson Wray, 1855.
1855 John Dopping.
1862 John Carroll.
1863 Francis Marsh.

Curate.

— Thomas Kishby (1615).

MULTIFARNHAM.

— Gilbert Purdam (1622).
1665 Walter Melvin or Melvill.
1670 Eugene Reilly.
1688 Audeon Reyly.
1692 Thomas or John Dobson.
1717 William Jones.
— Abel Marmion, 1734.
1734 Oliver Brady.
1762 John Wynne.
1779 James Maxwell.
1799 Ponsonby Gouldsbury.
1809 United to Stonehall.

Curate.

— Thomas Kishby (1622).

DYSART.

1309 John de Fresingfeld.
— Nicholas Moynagh (1407).
1407 Richard King.
1560 John Duffe.
1617 Adam Anderson.
1630 Randolph Adams.
1639 Robert Lackey.
1660 Thomas Burton.
1675 William Jones.
1688 John Forbes.
1692 Edward Wallen.
1723 William Jones.
1725 William Monypenny.
1761 Robert King.
1783 Christopher M'Allister.
1783 Henry Wynne.
1788 Richard Wynne.
1801 Stephen Radcliff.
1809 United to Churchtown.

UNION OF KILBIXEY.

Consists of Kilbixey and Kilmacnevin.

Kilmacnevin formerly belonged to the Union of Leney, but was transferred to Kilbixey after dis-

establishment. The Church (St. Bigseach) was built in 1798.

KILBIXEY.

— Henry Parr (1622).
1760 Thomas or Charles Meares.
1815 John Thomas De Burgh.
1822 Gerald Beere.
1849 William Irwin.
1864 William Izod O'Connor.
1865 Francis Henry Swift.
1875 Frederick John Badham, D.D.

KILMACNEVIN.

Henry Parr (1622).

RURAL DEANERY OF CLONMACNOISE.

PARISH OF BALLYLOUGHLOE.

The Church (Holy Trinity) was erected in 1812. A private chapel, which is used by the parishioners in the neighbourhood, was built at Moydrum by Lord Castlemaine, and was consecrated in 1879.

1542 Onorius Coffey.
1550 John Dillon.
1559 John Dillon.
1569 John Kellye.
1608 John Ankers.
1630 John Stevens.
1633 Richard Lingard.
1634 Thomas Fleetwood.
1662 Rowse Clopton.
1684 George Padmore.
1685 Robert Smyth.
1685 Robert Sintclare.
— John Smyth (1689).
1706 William Jackson.
1725 John Travers.
1774 William Maxwell.
1800 Thomas English.
1816 William Peacocke.
1858 Paulus Oemelius Singer.
1859 Thomas Gordon Caulfield.
1875 George Henry Moore Preston.
1886 Jonas Greene.
1903 Richard Frederick Martin Clifford.
1907 Beresford Townsend Gahan.

Curates.

— Robert Roberts (1699).
John Huleatt, 1733.
1733 James Marshall.
— Thomas Walsh (1842).
1857 John Crofton.
1857 William C. Ringwood.

PARISH OF KILCLEAGH.

Kilcleagh was generally held with Ballyloughloe and Athlone until 1816. The Church (St. Mary) was consecrated in 1788.

— John Ankers (1622).
1628 Mark Linche.
1639 Robert Lingate.
1664 John Stevens.
1706 William Jackson.
— Christopher Kean (1799).
— William Maxwell, 1800.
1803 Thomas English
1816 Arthur Rolleston.
— D. W. Tempe (1842).
— John Hopkins, 1856.
1856 Richard Gibbings, D.D.
1857 Charles J. Bayly.
1862 Richard Carter.
1864 William Irwin.
1865 Robert Healy.
1875 John Rennison.
1888 Thomas Heron Aldwell.
1904 J. Wybrants Johnston.

Curates.

— Spencer W. Walsh, D.D. (1842).
1870 John Swift Joly.
1898 H. W. Burgess, LL.D.
1901 John D. F. Morrow.

Parish of Athlone.

The Church (St. Mary) was built in 1826; the tower, however, belongs to an older structure.

— David Malone (1604).
1608 John Ankers.
1629 Richard Price.
1629 Mark Linche.
1633 Richard Lingard.
— Mr. Barton (1644).
— Samuel Cox, preacher (1658).
— Enoch Webb, preacher (1660).
1661 William Vincent.
1664 John Stevens.
1683 Edward Wallen.
1723 William Jones.
1747 Arthur Forbes.
1747 Arthur Grueber.
1755 Richard Handcock.
1791 James William Sterling.
1820 James Robert Moffatt.
1861 Edward Fleetwood Berry
1869 John Swift Joly.
1888 Richard Stuart Dobbs Campbell, D.D.

Curates.

— William Burnett (1733).
1768 Elias Handcock.
1824 Samuel Hodson.
1824 Alexander Campbell.
1825 Thomas Walsh.
1826 Travers Jones.
1827 C. H. Mangin.
1827 J. Kallis.
1829 C. H. Hayden.
1830 James Luby.
1833 Thomas Lanage.
— John Hewitt Wren (1842)
1851 Thomas Wilson.
1854 F. W. Maunsell.
1856 Thomas Wetherell.
1858 James Staunton.
1859 E. J. Handcock.
1860 Edward Isaac Haddock.
1861 E. A. Knipe.
1883 C. W. Roberts.
1884 John Roche Ardill.
1886 Frederick J. Grierson.
1902 William George Smylie.
1907 Cecil Ross Kitching.

UNION OF CLONMACNOISE.

Consists of Clonmacnoise and Tisaran.

This Union was made after disestablishment. The Church of Clonmacnoise (St. Keiran) is an ancient building. Tisaran Church (St. Saran) was built in 1806. A new church (St. Keiran) has been erected at Shannon Bridge. It was consecrated in 1877.

CLONMACNOISE.

1615 John Ankers.
— William Maxwell, preacher (1658).
1743 Philip Barrett.
1762 Stephen Booth.
1763 Joseph Pasley.
1764 William Donaldson.
1778 John Baily.
1799 John Gay Fitzgerald.
1843 James Wolfe Charleton.
1851 Charles Vignoles.
1874 N. R. Brunskill.
1880 James Edward Cullen.
1881 A. E. Crotty.
1887 S. E. Cooney.
1893 John George Hodges.

Curates.

1727 Robert Jackson.
— Nicholas Magrath (1842).

TISARAN.

1559 Patrick Morgan.
— John Stearne (1622).
1634 Thomas Ashbrooke.
1664 Cornelius O'Donnell.
1665 Thomas Coffey.
1672 George Lauder.
1709 Richard Moreton.
1731 James Smyth.
1732 John Antrobus.
1736 John Owens, D.D.
1744 Sir Philip Hoby, Bart.
1748 Henry Coghlan.
1797 Henry Maxwell.
1802 Henry Mahon.
1838 James Alexander.
1857 Charles J. Bayly.
1857 Richard Gibbings, D.D.
1866 Henry A. Sadleir.

Curates.

— Mr. Maxwell (1799).
— Mr. Hamilton (1799).
— H. Birmingham (1824).
— Charles Driscoll (1826).
— J. C. Wolfe (1842).
1865 Thomas Richard Setford Collins.

UNION OF FERBANE.

Consists of Wherry and Gallen.

This Union was formed after disestablishment. Ferbane Church was built in 1805, but the belfry was not erected until 1819. Gallen was formerly united to Rynagh. The Church (St. Conocus), situated in the village of Cloghan, was built in 1813.

WHERRY FOR FERBANE.

1639 Thomas Ashbrooke.
1664 Cornelius O'Donnell.
1670 George Lauder.
1731 James Smith.
1732 John Antrobus.
1736 John Owen.
1744 Sir Philip Hoby, Bart.
1748 Henry Coghlan.
1797 Henry Maxwell.
1802 Henry Mahon.
1815 Hugh Fitzgerald.
1837 Joseph Morgan Daly.
1838 James Alexander.
1851 Richard Gibbings.
1857 Charles James Bayly.
— James Forsythe, 1874.
1874 Donelan Bolingbroke Seymour.
1884 M. A. Devine.

GALLEN.

1664 John Stephens.
1682 Michael Cahill.
1739 James Price.
1798 Henry Maxwell.
— John Burdett, 1841.
1841 James Paul Holmes.
1849 Courtney Turner.
— William Drought, 1874.

Curates.

— Henry B. MacCartney (1826).
1859 Charles L. Thomas.
1870 James Forsythe.

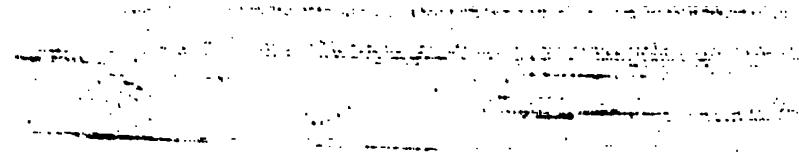
PARISH OF RYNAGH.

Rynagh was united to Gallen in 1798, but the Union was dissolved in 1841. The Church (St. Mary) was erected in 1829.

1639 Thomas Johnston.
1671 John Stevens.
1682 Michael Cahill.
— Thomas Piers, 1739.
1739 James Price.
1754 Richard Warburton.
1798 Henry Maxwell.
1798 George Brabazon.
1798 John Burdett.
1841 Robert Mitchell Kennedy
1843 John Joseph Fletcher.
1849 Courtenay Turner.
1856 Robert Staveley.
1867 Joseph Samuel Bell, LL.D.
1872 James A. Bell.
1886 J. Jackson Sherrard.

Curates.

1863 Frederick W. Wetherell.
1870 Arthur B. Nicholls.
1885 William Winter Burbury.



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